CANADIAN SHORT STORIES

Edited by

RAYMOND KNISTER

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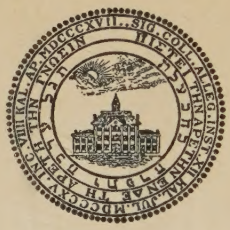

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EDITED BY
RAYMOND KNISTER

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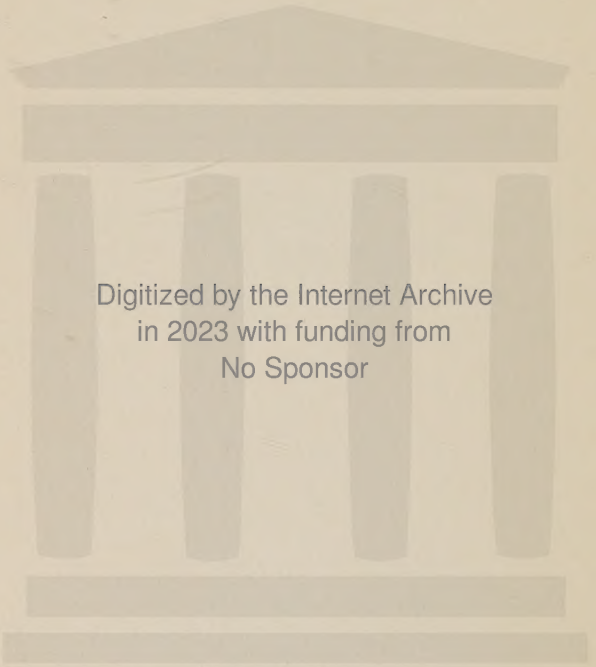
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I shall welcome information about or copies of Canadian stories of distinction which I may have overlooked from authors, editors, or students of Canadian literature, for use in a later edition of this book. Such matter may be addressed to me, care of The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 70 Bond Street, Toronto.

R. K.

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THE CANADIAN SHORT STORY

AT the outset of a new era there is opportunity to look back upon the old; and in nothing have we more clearly passed an epoch than in the short story, here in Canada. Literature as a whole is changing, new fields are being broken, new crops are being raised in them, and the changes apparent in other countries show counterparts in our development.

The short story has shared in the disadvantages of other types of literature and of culture as a whole in Canada. It is vain to say that it might have sprung from the soil as a new variant of the traditional form. There has been no national Burbank to create a Canadian subspecies of the short story as there was to breed Marquis wheat. It emerged, as the short story in the United States did, in a spirited emulation at best, or a shallow imitativeness at worst, of foreign models. This was natural in the case, unless we had managed without a literature for a few hundred years until we evolved a national consciousness of our own. But the pioneers did what was possible, in raising the old crops on new fields. Literature in the United States is only lately emerging from the imitative stage, and there are signs that it is doing the same thing here.

Obviously it has been harder for us to attain to anything like originality. Conventions have held sway with the compulsion of a tradition of romantic externals—they have been maintained as hardened patterns in a commercial exploitation of a last frontier. Some of these conventions are almost as remote from the life of Canada as the Latin-inscribed scrolls of monks and scholars were from the life of Mediæval Europe. The result is that much of our writing has seemed mechanical, and the literary flowering whereby it may be seen that the roots of a nation's life are sound has often had the aroma of wax and paper.

These are generalizations made from the facts. It is with the more or less successful exceptions that we are dealing in this book. There are difficulties enough in the way of high expression in any country and in any age. What is wanted is a few talents strong enough to overcome all such things. Criticism *á these*, sociological criticism particularly, when applied to literature, may be more than usually futile, human wisdom being finite in its application. But it is not unreasonable to assume that Canadian literature might have been different if Canada's status and condition among nations had been different. We had a new country but old peoples; wealth collectively and in the future, but individual poverty; a store of tradition and a prevalent illiteracy—and so much to be done that we had little time to study how we should do it.

Assuredly it was a momentous work, this making of a nation on the material side. And since we were necessarily consecrated to the task, we were bound to feel, whether we knew it and admitted it or not, inferior

to those nations which had done their building, or which possessed developed resources and more fully utilized wealth. Only by being self-contained and true to our individuality could we have attained to an indigenous literature. How could we be so? It took a more than usually vigorous talent to achieve any sort of adequate expression, in face of the difficulties. Not many very successfully attempted it, but of some of these men it is not unfair to claim that in happier circumstances they might have been great.

The general materialism had imposed a false æsthetics, on this continent. A permissible view of the history of literature shows the singer as being at first merely one of his tribe, singing unconsciously its grief or triumph in times of stress; later the poet had assumed his office, and was the bard, delegated to sing by whatever powers there were; still later the poet became himself, and wrote only of what concerned himself and his inmost soul. The poets achieved this evolution earlier than other workers in literature, because it became patent that unless the poet and his subject were one, neither amounted to anything. But prose writers have been consciously striving to revert to the tribal era, with their appeals to mob feeling and vulgar interests. Hence the barren nature of much of the multitudinous flotsam of periodical literature and best-sellers. The tendency has been upheld curiously, if only indirectly, by the classical theory of objectivity. In an absolute sense there is no objectivity. When Flaubert is bringing some undeniable picture to your recognition, he is doing it only to impose upon you some emotion which is part of his plan and the outgrowth of his own emotion. What is known as

realism is only a means to an end, the end being a personal projection of the world. In passing beyond realism, even while they employ it, the significant writers of our time are achieving a portion of evolution. But most tale-spinners did not even achieve realism, and were willing to forego their possibilities in the interest of material rewards bestowed as a result of such a course in other countries.

Possibly it was a necessity for something more than material rewards which pulled our most gifted men away from their country, and perhaps Canada would be prepared to grant that something—appreciation, mainly —now when they return full of years and honours. But if it was not money which took him away, it was acceptance of materialistic standards which proved the ruination of the writer entering competitive conditions in England and the United States. Not content with an escape from poverty, which has been the lot of the singer since David plucked his harp before Saul, he has insisted upon his deserts, and tried to vie with the luxury of the Sauls of this day himself—a course fatal to his self-respect and his sense of a calling. It is a "standard of living" to which many writers feel called more imperatively than to their professed art. Something of the guild spirit might be helpful. It has been said that the English writers of the Nineties embodied this in a sort; they did not have wives, homes, lands, or motor cars, but they had an inalienable sense of professional integrity, and they brought into being works of real merit, if of a minor order: and from the Rhymers' Club came William Butler Yeats. The little "Group of the Sixties" here partook in a degree of this advantage in their early

poetry. But for the most part our men had to begin in a non-conducting sort of atmosphere, a sort of vacuum of poor acoustic properties, whence they passed to one where they were deafened by the noise of the mob. Our loss in the case of a writer of such endowment as Arthur Stringer's is perhaps proportionately greater than that sustained by American literature when Jack London became a victim of American criteria of success.

In this general state of affairs the short story has had to take its chance. But it has come out better than most other forms of literature, for a variety of reasons. (Because of brevity, most obviously and plausibly. Many people, given the right opportunity and circumstance, might produce a meritorious lyric or brief tale.). We have had no national drama because, more than fiction, drama is a communal art, and there has not been a body of people interested enough, moved enough, by Canadian life to appreciate its "counterfeit presentment" on the stage. We could not even have poetic drama which signified much, because that, and its writers, must be rooted in the soil. Shakespeare might write of Rome or Denmark, but his imagination was England, and the people responded. For similar reasons the novel has been forbidden to us. Not enough people had the courage and tolerance of life to face its implications in the large, or enough love to endure seeing it carried to its æsthetic and emotional heightening and logical ends in sustained art. Isolated exceptions like *Maria Chapdelaine*, where the creator was cut off from any influence between himself and his subject, but was supported in his own power by the strength derived from an old and powerful, but still fresh and vital tradition of art, prove this contention.

The fact that the short story has fared as well or perhaps better than other forms in Canada is, however, largely owing to the nature of its appeal, which is elemental. People like to listen to an interesting tale, whatever its canon. And if the coincidence occurs that a vigorous, strongly coloured, even adventurous life is available to the tale-teller, his appeal is immediate and direct. So we find that these early fragmentary delineations could have a measure of truth and vitality impossible to the novel, which followed the course and destiny of years in a way inoffensive to a hopeful people. Within the limits of entertainment there was little need for glossing details.

Yet in typical Northern stories there is no actual acceptance of life and hence, paradoxically, a frequently disinterested gusto and ease in evoking it. The Wilds are grim, yes, the Barrens may claim your life; bad men and wild animals abound. But yet there is youth, health, virtue, above all, luck. These talismans forbid tragedy, and if there is death, it is only a possible death, and that too is a matter of luck. Such an attitude precludes a tragic philosophy, and makes of life a game: it is a survival perhaps of biological necessity in Northern peoples. In older civilizations, where life has been easier for many generations, there is an acceptance of fate as necessity inhering in character, which results in a different conception of art. Hence it is that the work of Sir Gilbert Parker is at its best when it is avowedly Canadian, though his talented and imperialistic globe-trotting has taken him into many lands. His warm-blooded, courageous tales and his theatrically urbane

hero, Pierre, have had a definite part in forming a Canadian tradition. Sheer imaginative gusto and magnanimity can impart to materials of any sort a real value, while a cheap commercialism will lower them to a species of wish-fulfillment to which any high view of life, partaking of tragedy or of comedy, is impossible.

In the literature of older lands, animals were regarded as domestic servants, even as comrades, or simply as quarry. It remained for Canadian writers to visualize wild beasts as individuals, motivated by sense appeals and reasoning intelligence; and the result has been not a new form, but a hybrid of subject-matter. The freshened point of view made possible by the use of animals (or household furniture, if you will) as characters was in the main neglected, and reactions were shown in fixed patterns dictated by sentiment or moral prejudice. And this when the freedom should have permitted a naturalistic acceptance and a poetry of the real, or a phantastic humorous or satirical expression. A genuine sense of continuity, a few finely objective stories, notably the early ones of Charles G. D. Roberts, the innovator of this type, were followed by many, many tales containing more or less valuable information in natural history, and no value as art.

A most significant circumstance in the development of the Canadian short story has been the dearth of editors to encourage and discover writers of value. A patient reading of our magazines will reveal a plain delinquency, more especially in recent years than in the days when writers of any kind were scarce enough, and the best ones were less easily evaded. But of our better writers of the last generation, practically all have been obliged to adjust their contributions to foreign markets,

and having won fame in other countries, were complaisantly recognized at home. Meanwhile magazines were being run with the avowed intention of discovering native talent; instead of which they were encouraging, in the main, third-rate imitators of third-rate foreign models. Still, times are changing, and if we do not get the two or three editors of genius whom we need, conditions will improve anyway. If editors refuse to lead the public, the public quite possibly will lead the editors, for the grade of even some of the most popular foreign weeklies and women's journals is good enough to force a kind of improvement by their competition. Many thousands of Canadians are learning to see their own daily life, and to demand its presentment with a degree of realism. This may result, opportunely, in the upbuilding of great popular magazines, and finally an appreciative and representative audience may stand ready to welcome the best that our most gifted writers can create. The long neglect of such a writer as Will E. Ingersoll, almost the only one to depict our farming millions, may then be impossible.

But we shall not need to wait for such a development before we shall have able interpreters. Our best writers in the past accomplished what they did against the stream of the populace in other countries, and within something like a backwater of indifference in their own. But there has been a sudden growth of consciousness. It is, paradoxically, just when the rest of world literature is suffering a reversion to aristocratic standards that such writers as Merrill Denison and Morley Callaghan can appear. We can't lift ourselves by our bootlaces, and not until other nations have done so do we arrive at the stage where it is recognized that each creative

book is not to be read by every person who can read—which was the case as recently as the time of Dickens. Whatever the gifts of the new men may prove to be, they should have less trouble than their forerunners in making them effective.

Obstacles detrimental to a truly indigenous literature have made more salient, however, the actual achievement of our writers. There is such a thing as a Canadian spirit, and perhaps in no other department of literature is it so vivid and indubitable. Stephen Leacock and Marjorie Pickthall, who were born in England, show it. Albert Hickman's *Canadian Nights*, in spite of limitations and derivations, could have been written by a Canadian only; nor could his irrepressibly wrestling and idealistic young drunkards of good family have been the same in another country. There are the inspired phantasies of Norman Duncan; and there is that story of E. W. Thomson, in which a lumberman of property discovers a former employee stealing provisions after having rejected unsatisfactory wages. The lumberman takes him back, making him a loan of what he needs for his family, and heartens him with words—a story which in an American or English magazine, or in one of ours now, would seem completely and viciously sentimental, and which was simply a true vision of pioneer virtue and that neighbourliness necessary in a new country. And a perfect flowering of art is embodied in one volume, *In the Village of Viger*, by Duncan Campbell Scott. It is work which has had an unobtrusive influence; but it stands out after thirty years as the most satisfyingly individual contribution to the Canadian short story.

RAYMOND KNISTER

Toronto, April, 1928.

CANADIAN SHORT STORIES

LAST SPRING THEY CAME OVER

By MORLEY CALLAGHAN

ALFRED Bowles came to Canada from England and got a job on a Toronto paper. He was a young fellow with clear blue eyes and heavy pimples on the lower part of his face, the son of a Baptist minister whose family was too large for his salary. He got twenty dollars a week on the paper and said it was a surprisingly good screw to start. For two-fifty a week he got an attic room in a brick house painted brown on Mutual Street. He ate his meals in a quick lunch near the office. He bought a cane and a light grey fedora.

He wasn't a good reporter but was inoffensive and obliging. After he had been working two weeks the fellows took it for granted he would be fired in a little while and were nice to him, liking the way the most trifling occurrences surprised him. He was happy to carry his cane on his arm and wear the fedora at a jaunty angle, quite the reporter. He liked to explain that he was doing well. He wrote home about it.

When they put him doing night police he felt important, 'phoning the fire department, hospitals, and police stations, trying to be efficient. He was getting along all right. It was disappointing when after a week the assistant city editor, Mr. H. J. Brownson, warned him to 'phone his home if anything important happened,

and he would have another man cover it. But Bowles got to like hearing the weary, irritable voice of the assistant editor called from his bed at three o'clock in the morning. He liked to call Mr. Brownson politely as often and as late as possible, thinking it a bit of good fun.

Alfred wrote long letters to his brother and to his father, the Baptist minister, using a typewriter, carefully tapping the keys, occasionally laughing to himself. In a month's time he had written six letters describing the long city room, the fat belly of the city editor, and the bad words the night editor used when speaking of the Orangemen.

The night editor took a fancy to him because of the astounding puerility of his political opinions. Alfred was always willing to talk pompously of the British Empire policing the world and about all Catholics being aliens, and the future of Ireland and Canada resting with the Orangemen. He flung his arms wide and talked in the hoarse voice of a bad actor, but no one would have thought of taking him seriously. He was merely having a dandy time. The night editor liked him because he was such a nice boy.

Then Alfred's brother came out from the old country, and got a job on the same paper. Some of the men started talking about cheap cockney labourers crowding the good guys out of the jobs, but Harry Bowles was frankly glad to get the twenty a week. It never occurred to him that he had a funny idea of good money. With his first pay he bought a derby hat, a pair of spats, and a cane, but even though his face was clear and had a good colour he never looked as nice as his younger brother

because his heavy nose curved up at the end. The landlady on Mutual Street moved a double bed into Alfred's room and Harry slept with his brother.

The days passed with many good times together. At first it was awkward that Alfred should be working at night and his brother in the daytime, but Harry was pleased to come down to the office every night at eleven and they went down the street to the hotel that didn't bother about Prohibition. They drank a few glasses of good beer. It became a kind of rite that had to be performed carefully. Harry would put his left foot and Alfred his right foot on the rail and leaning an elbow on the bar they would slowly survey the zigzag line of frothing glasses the length of the long bar. Men jostled them for a place at the foot rail.

And Alfred said, "Well, a bit of luck."

Harry, grinning and raising his glass, said, "Righto."

"It's the stuff that heals."

"Down she goes."

"It helps the night along."

"Fill them up again."

"Toodleoo."

Then they would walk out of the crowded bar-room, vaguely pleased with themselves. Walking slowly and erectly along the street they talked with assurance, a mutual respect for each other's opinion making it merely an exchange of information. They talked of the Englishman in Canada, comparing his lot with that of the Englishman in South Africa and India. They had never travelled but to ask what they knew of strange lands would have made one feel uncomfortable; it was better to take it for granted that the Bowles boys knew all

about the ends of the earth and had judged them carefully, for in their eyes was the light of far-away places. Once in a while, after walking a block or two, one of the brothers would say he would damn well like to see India and the other would say it would be simply topping.

After work and on Sundays they took a look at the places they had heard about in the city. One Sunday they got up in good time and took the boat to Niagara. Their father had written asking if they had seen the Falls and would they send some souvenirs. That day they had as nice a time as a man would want to have. Standing near the pipe rail a little way from the hotel that overlooks the Falls they watched the waterline just before the drop, smooth as a long strip of bevelled glass, and Harry compared it favourably with a cataract in the Himalayas and a giant waterfall in Africa, just above the Congo. They took a car along the gorge and getting off near the whirlpool, picked out a little hollow near a big rock at the top of the embankment where the grass was lush and green. They stretched themselves out with hats tilted over their eyes for sunshades. The river whirled below. They talked about the funny ways of Mr. Brownson and his short fat legs and about the crazy women who fainted at the lifted hand of the faith healer who was in the city for the week. They liked the distant rumble of the Falls. They agreed to try and save a lot of money and go west to the Pacific in a year's time. They never mentioned trying to get a raise in pay.

Afterwards they each wrote home about the trip, sending the souvenirs.

Neither one was doing well on the paper. Harry wasn't much good because he hated writing the plain

copy and it was hard for him to be strictly accurate. He liked telling a good tale but it never occurred to him that he was deliberately lying. He imagined a thing and straightway felt it to be true. But it never occurred to Alfred to depart from the truth. He was accurate but lazy, never knowing when he was really working. He was taken off night police and for two weeks helped a man do courts at the City Hall. He got to know the boys at the press gallery, who smiled at his naïve sincerity and thought him a decent chap without making up their minds about him. Every noon hour Harry came to the press gallery and the brothers, sitting at typewriters, wrote long letters all about the country and the people, anything interesting, and after exchanging letters, tilting back in their swivel chairs, laughing out loud. Heaven only knows who got the letters in the long run. Neither one, when in the press gallery, seemed to write anything for the paper.

Some of the men tried kidding Alfred, teasing him about women, asking if he found the girls in this country to his liking; but he seemed to enjoy it more than they did. Seriously he explained that he had never met a girl in this country but they looked very nice. Once Alfred and Bun Brophy, a red-headed fellow with a sharp tongue who did City Hall for the paper, were alone in the gallery. Brophy had in his hands a big picture of five girls in masquerade costumes. Without explaining that he loved one of the girls, Brophy asked Bowles which of the lot was the prettiest.

"You want me to settle that," said Alfred, grinning and waving his pipe. He very deliberately selected a demure little girl with a shy smile.

Brophy was disappointed. "Don't you think this one is pretty?"—a colourful, bold-looking girl.

"Well, she's all right in her way, but she's too vivacious. I'll take this one. I like them kittenish." Alfred said.

Brophy wanted to start an argument but Alfred said it was neither here nor there. He really didn't like women.

"You mean to say you never step out?" Brophy said.

"I've never seemed to mix with them," he said, adding that the whole business didn't matter because he liked boys much better.

The men in the press room heard about it and some suggested nasty things to Alfred. It was hard to tease him when he wouldn't be serious. Sometimes they asked if he took Harry out walking in the evenings. Brophy called them the heavy lovers. The brothers didn't mind because they thought the fellows were having a little fun.

In the fall Harry was fired. The editor in a nice note said that he was satisfied Mr. H. W. Bowles could not adapt himself to their methods. But everybody wondered why he hadn't been fired sooner. He was no good on the paper.

The brothers smiled, shrugged their shoulders, and went on living together. Alfred still had his job. Every noon hour in the City Hall press room they were together, writing letters.

Time passed and the weather got cold. Alfred's heavy coat came from the Old Country and he gave his vest and a thin sweater to Harry, who had only a light

spring coat. As the weather got colder Harry buttoned his coat higher up on his throat and even though he looked cold, he was neat as a pin with his derby and cane.

Then Alfred lost his job. The editor, disgusted, called him a fool. For the first time since coming over last spring he felt hurt, something inside him was hurt and he told his brother about it, wanting to know why people acted in such a way. He said he had been doing night police. On the way over to No. 7 Station very late Thursday night he had met two men from other papers. They told him about a big fire earlier in the evening just about the time when Alfred was accustomed to going to the hotel to have a drink with his brother. They were willing to give all the details and Alfred thankfully shook hands with them and hurried back to the office to write the story. Next morning the assistant editor phoned Alfred and asked how it was the morning papers missed the story. Alfred tried to explain but Mr. Brownson said he was a damn fool for not phoning the police and making sure instead of trying to make the paper look like a pack of fools, printing a fake story. The fellows who had kidded him said that too. Alfred kept asking his brother why the fellows had to do it. He seemed to be losing a good feeling for people.

Still the brothers appeared at noon time in the press room. They didn't write so many letters. They were agreeable, cheerful, on good terms with everybody. Bun Brophy every day asked how they were doing and they felt at home there. Harry would stand for a while watching the checker game always in progress, knowing that if he stood staring intently at the black and red squares, watching every deliberate move, he would be

asked to sit in when it was necessary for one of the players to make the rounds in the hall. Once Brophy gave Harry his place and walked over to the window where Alfred stood watching the fleet of automobiles arranged in a square in the courtyard. The police wagon with a load of drunks was backing toward the cells.

"Say Alfie, I often wonder how you guys manage," he said.

"Oh, first rate."

"Well you ought to be in a bad way by now."

"Oh no, we have solved the problem," said Alfred in a grand way, grinning, as if talking about the British Empire.

He was eager to tell how they did it. There was a store in their block where a package of tobacco could be got for five cents; they did their own cooking and were able to live on five dollars a week.

"What about coming over and having tea with us sometime?" Alfred said. He was decidedly on his uppers but he asked Brophy to visit them and have tea.

Brophy, abashed, suggested the three of them go over to the café and have a little toast. Harry talked volubly on the way over and while having coffee. He was really a better talker than his brother. They sat in an arm chair lunch, gripped the handles of their thick mugs, and talked about religion. The brothers were sons of a Baptist minister but never thought of going to church. It seemed that Brophy had travelled a lot during wartime and afterwards in Asia Minor and India. He was telling about a great golden temple of the Sikhs and Amritsar and Harry listened carefully, asking many questions. Then they talked about newspapers until

Harry started talking about the east, slowly feeling his way. All of a sudden he told about standing on a height of land near Amritsar, looking down at a temple. It couldn't have been so but he would have it that Brophy and he had seen the same temple and he described the country in the words Brophy had used. When he talked that way you actually believed that he had seen the temple.

Alfred liked listening to his brother but he said finally, "Religion is a funny business. I tell you it's a funny business." And for the time being no one would have thought of talking seriously about religion. Alfred had a casual way of making a cherished belief or opinion seem unimportant, a way of dismissing even the bright yarns of his brother.

After that afternoon in the café Brophy never saw Harry. Alfred came often to the City Hall but never mentioned his brother. Some one said maybe Harry had a job but Alfred laughed and said no such luck in this country, explaining casually that Harry had a bit of a cold and was resting up. In the passing days Alfred came only once in a while to the City Hall, writing his letters without enthusiasm.

The press men would have tried to help the brothers if they had heard Harry was sick. They were entirely ignorant of the matter. On a Friday afternoon at three-thirty Alfred came into the gallery and, smiling apologetically, told Brophy that his brother was dead; the funeral was to be in three quarters of an hour; would he mind coming; it was pneumonia, he added. Brophy, looking hard at Alfred, put on his hat and coat and they went out.

It was a poor funeral. The hearse went on before along the way to the Anglican cemetery that overlooks the ravine. One old cab followed behind. There had been a heavy fall of snow in the morning and the slush on the pavement was thick. Alfred and Brophy sat in the old cab, silent. Alfred was leaning forward, his chin resting on his hands, the cane acting as a support, and the heavy pimples stood out on the lower part of his white face. Brophy was uncomfortable and chilly but he mopped his shining forehead with a big handkerchief. The window was open and the air was cold and damp.

Alfred politely asked how Mrs. Brophy was doing. Then he asked about Mr. Brownson.

"Oh, he's fine," Brophy said. He wanted to close the window but it would have been necessary to move Alfred so he sat huddled in the corner, shivering.

Alfred asked suddenly if funerals didn't leave a bad taste in the mouth and Brophy, surprised, started talking absently about that golden temple of the Sikhs in India. Alfred appeared interested until they got to the cemetery. He said suddenly he would have to take a look at the temple one fine day.

They buried Harry Bowles in a grave in the paupers' section on a slippery slope of the hill. The earth was hard and chunky and it thumped down on the coffin case. It snowed a little near the end.

On the way along the narrow, slippery foot-path up the hill Alfred thanked Brophy for being thoughtful enough to come to the funeral. There was little to say. They shook hands and went different ways.

After a day or two Alfred again appeared in the press room. He watched the checker game, congratulated the

winner, and then wrote home. The men were sympathetic and said it was too bad about his brother. And he smiled cheerfully and said they were good fellows. In a little while he seemed to have convinced them that nothing important had really happened.

His last cent must have gone to the undertaker, for he was particular about paying bills, but he seemed to get along all right. Occasionally he did a little work for the paper, a story from a night assignment when the editor thought the staff was being overworked.

One afternoon at two-thirty in the press gallery Brophy saw the last of Alfred, who was sucking his pipe, his feet up on a desk, wanting to be amused. Brophy asked if anything had turned up. In a playful resigned tone, his eye on the big clock, Alfred said he had until three to join the Flying Corps. They wouldn't take him, he said, unless he let them know by three.

Brophy said, "How will you like that?"

"I don't fancy it."

"But you're going, though?"

"Well, I'm not sure. Something else may come along." It was a quarter to three and he was sitting there waiting for a job to turn up before three.

No one saw him after that, but he didn't join the Flying Corps. Someone in the gallery said that wherever he went he probably wrote home as soon as he got there.

THE WEATHER BREEDER

By MERRILL DENISON

THE farm lay at the eastern end of the bay, a straggling clearing of fairly level land which seemed to be eternally battling for its life with the second growth of poplars and birches that hemmed it in. But it was a good farm; over sixty acres of stiff blue clay such as is found deposited in pockets among the glacier-scoured granite hills, and around the mouths of creeks. It had been cleared of pine stumps of the original forest, left by the lumbermen, by the same pioneer who had built the log house and barns, the stable and the neat workshop. He must have been a good workman, that early pioneer; the adze work on the two-foot logs showed it, but he had eight children, and when his wife died officials came up from Toronto and took the children away because he would not send them to school. The school house was twelve miles away and on the other side of the lake.

He sold out to old John, and left. Old John never lived there, choosing to remain nearer the village on his own farm, a sorry thing which straddled a glacial moraine that every spring spewed a new crop of boulders on the scrawny fields. But he abandoned them, except for garden stuff and as pasturage for a few sheep, and used the lake farm in Settler's Bay to grow his grain and hay.

In spring it was mosquito infested low-land; in summer something like a gigantic fireless cooker with its

surrounding hills of rock, burnt bare by succeeding fires. The stiff clay was hard to work. It meant steady unremitting toil that could not even be commenced until the eight mile row up the lake had been accomplished. He cleared out an old shanty trail across the big rock—for there was no road on that side of the lake—and led his horses up the back way, plowed the land and harrowed it, sowed the seed. Old John never complained; he never thought his life monotonous. It was all part of the yearly fight to grow enough food to carry him and his daughter, Lize, through the winter until the fight could commence again. Year after year the same, and he was sixty, and dry and hard.

The third year he bought a second hand threshing outfit and one of the summer campers who owned a launch towed it across the lake for him on a raft that he and Jim, his prospective son-in-law, made out of huge driftwood cedars. The outfit was of great assistance. It saved so much time, and he was able to get his grain down to the foot of the lake before the freeze-up.

Old John knew little about machinery and he was obstinate and opinionated, as old backwoods farmers who have waged a drawn battle with nature all their lives are apt to be. He was also the least bit hard of hearing. These traits combined to do him injury. Standing on the mow frame, bundling great armfuls of dusty straw behind him, the old man paid no attention to the boys' warning, shouted to him above the clacking noise of the thresher. The frame gave way, he slipped and fell, wrenching one knee so badly that Jim had to help him to the house. There he remained for three weeks while one after another the perfect days of late September slipped by, the boys went on threshing and,

after it was finished, carrying bags of grain down to the water's edge, and Lize cared for his leg and souring mood as best she could.

It was the first time Old John had ever been forced to remain indoors. He roamed between the kitchen, where he had two chairs arranged in front of the window, and his bed in the back room—restless and grouchy. He left his pipe in one place and growled because he could not find it somewhere else. He got in Lize's way when she was cooking and when she was clearing dishes. He complained bitterly about everything; about himself, about the boys, about the weather.

Particularly about the weather.

Never had there been such a fall in Ontario. An unvarying succession of mellow, cloudless days with a soft haze purpling the hills, even at noontime, and adding a greater richness to the autumn colouring of the hardwoods. Perfect autumn days when the sunlight lay like a caress on hills and lake, and trees seemed conscious of their flaming beauty.

Days for pagan prayers; and each morning the old man hobbled to his window, looked out, and growled:

"Grh! Another of them damn weather breeders."

No longer could he trust the weather; too often had his hopes, his very sustenance been wiped out in a few hours. A lifelong struggle with the soil had taught him. Late frosts in Spring and early frosts in Autumn; grain burnt with drought one year and the kernels of the grain scalded by sodden fields the next; a field of oats, golden ripe for the reaping, pounded flat by hail storms.

To him the weather was a personality, vague and formless, but filled with trickery and deceit, and low cunning which sent such days as these—a personality

with which he was engaged in a lifelong duel of wits. A duel he could never win, he realized; the best he hoped for was a draw. A decent enough old fellow, rugged and patient, hard working and honest, he lived in a state of epic pessimism in good weather. Bad weather he did not mind; it could not get worse. Good weather he hated; it could not get better.

Lize did her best to cheer him; the boys joked with him, tried to hearten him with gossip about the work, their progress and the success of the crop. They bantered him about his gloomy weather prophecies, and every day he grew more sour. Each morning he foretold calamity; each evening a serene and placid sunset mocked him. The boys scoffed at him, and later scorned his miserable forebodings. It made him bitter and it hurt his pride to have his wisdom jeered at by youth. He would not go outside the house, but stayed inside and brooded.

At first Lize did not mind him. She was twenty, a dutiful daughter, fair, with an elusive beauty that might last two babies, certainly not three. She was happy and she had her work to do. When she was drying dishes she could look out the window, across the sunlit field of oat stubble, and see Jim, her lover, stout-hearted and strong-limbed, carrying bags of grain on his back from the barn to the water's edge. The drying waited while she watched his sturdy figure until it was hidden from her by a shoulder of rock down near the beach. And she would turn to her dishes with a slow happy smile. They would be married before winter; with such a crop Jim's share would give them enough to start. Unlike most backwoods lovers, they had waited

a long time for each other and had not mated as the wilder animals do with the Spring. Young Levi passed too, sweating under his heavy load. Each time she was glad to see him; every bag he carried added to the slowly mounting total she carried in her mind and heart. But she did not pause in her work as she did when Jim passed.

But even Lize's even temper had its limits. With the growing of the pile of bags down on the beach, old John's perpetual grumblings grew worse until the boys lost patience with him and Lize, long-suffering and tender hearted Lize, grew troubled. She did not rebel, or answer with the caustic wit of backwoods women—she crept within herself. When Jim, proud and happy in his work, stole a moment so that he could talk to her, to come to the pail of drinking water standing on a bench inside the door, she was quiet. When he tried to catch her she put the table between them and glanced nervously over her shoulder at the door of her father's room. Jim could not understand it; he would go back to his work, hurt and disappointed.

At last the end was in sight. Early one morning Levi took the boat and rowed across the lake to the summer camper's and asked him to come that afternoon with his launch and tow the big flat-bottomed punt behind it. He returned at nine o'clock and all day the boys worked feverishly in the hot sunshine, each one trying to outdo the other, carrying the hundred-pound bags from the barn, through the yard, along the path by the edge of the field and down to the water. It was a lazy day, humid and breathless. The smoke from the Mallory Lake fires hung low above the hills to the north, and the lake lay still under the heat.

Dripping with sweat the boys worked on, stopping impatiently when Lize called them for dinner, gulping down their food and hurrying back to work again. At four they looked out on the lake for the camper with his launch, the two of them standing on their bags of grain like children playing "I'm the king of the castle". The last bag was there under their feet. Another year's battle ended in victory; the moon was full that night and before morning their grain would be at the foot of the lake and sold, perhaps, by noon. Jim spoke:

"You watch for Murl, Levi. I'm goin' up to the house to tell Lize we're through."

He found her wiping the table when he gently opened the door. Her back was to him and he stole quietly up behind her and kissed her neck where the fair hair curled away from it. She was startled, and pushed him from her with nervous haste.

"No, Jim! no!" she pleaded. "Paw'll hear you'n be out here raisin' ructions. Please, Jim, go on away. He's gettin' sourer'n sourer."

She looked anxiously toward the door of her father's room, and then at the flushed, disappointed face of the boy before her, hurt because she had no praise to give him.

"It seems like you didn't want me hangin' round—to my way a thinkin'," he complained.

"Jim!"

"And it ain't as if you hadn't promised, neither," he continued hotly, too grieved to notice her concern. "If I hadn't been goin' with you sincet we was young ones. . ."

"Please, Jim," she interrupted, placing her hand soothingly on his moist arm. "Don't talk so loud.

He'll hear you and there ain't no sense gettin' him out here when he'll stay in there, quiet. And he ain't been talkin' kindly about us gettin' married this fall." The look in his blue eyes made her slip her hand to his shoulder. "Please, Jim, don't look at me like that, please. It ain't my fault, but we can't go again his wishes. You said so yourself."

He suffered her hand unwelcomely, it seemed, and spoke in a hot whisper:

"It ain't my fault. I guess I done my share this summer's last spring. I got half stares in them oats 'n I'm goin' to tell him so. I'm glad to see your paw and I'll say to him, I'll say, 'Lookut, you ain't the only one round here that's gettin' sour.' He ain't done no work; he ain't done nothin' but set 'n growl. I'm gettin' 'bout sick o' the sort o' thing. I ain't goin' to stand it. I'll say to him. . ."

She wanted to comfort him, but he turned angrily from her and strode toward the door, opening it quickly. Levi was standing outside. He was on his way from the beach and had paused, puzzled by the look of the sky toward the east. It seemed heavier and darker there, but then the lower reaches of the sky are deceptive on hazy days. A dull pewter sheen comes over them and makes it difficult to know for sure if clouds or dust-screened blue is there. When he heard the door open behind him, Levi decided it was smoke, and turned.

"Won't comin' round the end of Chris's Point," he said, stepping past Jim into the house. Jim followed him to hear the news. "He's towin' the punt an' two row-boats. We can take fifty bags at a lick. Get her down in four trips easy."

They made their plans while Lize pleaded with them to go. They were on the point of leaving when the old man opened the door of his room and stood there looking at them, a picture of abysmal gloom. His gray hair usually a picturesque, chrysanthemum-like mass, was pulled far down on his forehead, accentuating the scowl that was always there, and giving him an expression of comic sorrow. He stood bent forward, leaning on a short cane, his ragged vest falling vertically from his shoulders and his braces festooned dejectedly about his knees.

Lize turned guiltily to her work; the boys shifted awkwardly under his steady gaze. The old man growled to himself and hobbled toward his chair, on which the afternoon sunlight was falling. He jerked it away, as if, somehow, the chair had betrayed him and gone over to the enemy.

"Sure is a slick day, Mr. Hawley," Levi stammered, as one will try to say anything to break a strained silence.

The old man snarled and slumped further into his chair.

"You're fools, the pack of you. Don't you know nothin'?"

"I know we got the grain down," Jim exclaimed, a hint of triumph in his voice. "It's waitin' on the beach, an' Murl's headin' up the bay now with his launch."

"It'll all be spoilt," old John predicted with assurance. The boys laughed with an easy confidence that infuriated the old man. "Damn crazy notion draggin' a couple a tons a grain round the big lake with the squalls that's always comin' up."

Levi added to his rage:

"Why, there ain't been a wind for a month, Mr. Hawley."

"Ain't that what I been tellin' you all along. Jest one day like this after another," he said.

"Aw, what do you want?" Jim interrupted, disgustedly. "Want the sun to shine all night? There ain't been a day sincet we come up here we had to knock off work."

"They's weather breeders, I tell you," the old man shouted. "Jest one damn weather breeder after another. The trouble with youse is you don't know nothin'. We ought to had a storm when the moon turned." He sneered at them with the malignant pity of old age. "You think it's all right not to have a storm with the moon, don't youse? There ain't been an equalnoxial this year. Do you know what that means?"

He spoke as one who tells of Armageddon—next week. Jim snickered:

"Kinda lucky we missed her for oncet, eh?"

"Missed her?" the old man roared. "We ain't missed her. Lookut there," waving his cane towards the window, flooded with sunlight. "She's savin' herself up, that's what she's doin'. Same haze on the hills, not a breath of air movin', jest crouchin' there, simmerin', and waitin'."

He rambled on, an inspired wrathy prophet of nature's malevolence, filling the small room with his predictions of horrible disaster until Lize felt as if the low-beamed ceiling were becoming lower and the log walls crowding in. In desperation she went into the other room, and Levi, wearied, edged toward the door and

slipped outside. Jim watched the old man, slouched down in his chair, his stubby beard sunk upon his chest, and his brooding eyes staring into the oven of the fireless stove as if therein lay winter and a hope of better things. Jim, for all his anger, could not help feeling a contemptuous pity for him, aged and discredited.

But he wanted to speak to him, to have it out with him about Lize. Nothing had ever stood between them but lack of money—his was the poorest family in the Mishinog—and that was over now. The grain, his share, would start them. He smiled as old John peered hopefully out of the window, searched the distant sky and then settled back into his chair again, with the old disappointment stealing over his face.

"Ain't nothin," he muttered to himself. "Thought I seen a cloud there to the north but it ain't nothin' but them damn fires. If it wasn't for them weather breeders they'd been out long ago."

Jim came, quite abruptly, to the end of his patience.

"Aw, you're actin' like a cow with sore tits in fly time," he broke out, the accumulation of real and imagined wrongs goading him on to dangerous insult. "Youse old lads always figger you can tell about the weather, and, by gawd, I ain't never seen one of youse ever get it right yet. Not oncet. Last fall, when we butchered that there pig and you looks at the milt you was awful wise 'cause it was poor. You says it was goin' to be an open winter without snow. It was the worst we seen in years. Thirty-five below down at the store, snow to your waist. You says so yourself when it was over."

The old man rose to his feet, quivering with a mighty rage, too wrought-up to speak. He pointed his cane,

palsied with his righteous indignation, toward the door. Jim had committed treason, foul treason. Jim did not move, he stood his ground defiantly, fearing that he had gone too far, perhaps.

"Well? What're you hangin' round for?" the old man quivered when he found his voice.

"I was goin' to ast you somethin'."

"About Lize, I s'pose," John spat scornfully. "Comin' round whinin' 'bout marryin' when you ain't got a cent in the world but shares in that grain down there on the beach waitin' to be spoiled. By gawd, you ain't goin' to come round here throwin' no milt outen a half starved hog up in my face and expect me to give you a thanks offerin' o' Lize."

Having avenged the insult of the pig's milt—the most respected form of divination in the backwoods—by forbidding the boy the thing that lay nearest his heart, the old man felt a little better, and a little ashamed. That was why he jerked the chair around and banged into a new position and sat down with his back to Jim, childishly, as if in that way he defied the boy to argue with him or question his decision. Besides, he did not care to meet the boy's eyes.

Jim looked at him and knew that it was useless to say anything. The old man would feel differently when the grain was sold, and he could be up and around again. Jim felt sure of that. He opened the door, which faced due west, and the sight of the peaceful fields and the blue lake beyond them restored something of his natural gaiety. On the beach, Levi and Murl were standing beside the bow of the launch looking anxiously toward the house. Jim closed the door and walked toward them.

The old man stared at the stove with unfocused eyes, his hands folded across his belly, long legs stretched in front of him. From time to time he drew slowly on his pipe and the smoke escaped from his lips with a tiny pop. Lize returned to work with a suspicious redness about her eyes, which she wiped from time to time with her knuckles. The house was still except for the old man's heavy breathing, the frustrated hum of a blue bottle fly at the window, and the rustle of Lize at her work.

A low rumble like distant thunder broke the stillness. John raised his head and listened. The sound came again, far off and low. He shifted his chair and looked toward the half-open door through which a bar of golden light illumined one corner of the dim interior.

"Lize, what's that noise?"

"It must be Murl draggin' the boats up, Paw."

He accepted the answer and lapsed into his morose silence.

On the beach three young men stood close together and looked toward the east.

"What do you make of it, Jim?"

"Don't look like smoke. Lookut there, Levi. Just beyond that swale. Lookut them birches."

"See that there swirl of sand by the fence corner? There!"

"Look! There's another!"

"My gawd, look over there above the knoll. Beyond the Dyer Lake hardwoods."

"Look! There's another."

"Funny, there doesn't seem to be a breath of wind. It's curiously still, isn't it?"

"But they's white caps out beyond Chris's Point."

"Jim, she's a comin,"—in awed tones from Levi.

"Ain't nothin"—with forced assurance from Jim. "You're gettin' as bad as the old lad."

"Looks pretty black to me, boys," from Murl, a slight, dark lad with the city stamp on his khaki slacks and his white shirt. "Coming up to the house?"

"Think I'll stay here and watch it a bit."

Murl left them there, two motionless figures which cast long purple shadows across the sand, pink in the late sunlight. A great fright growing in their hearts but each of them afraid to admit to the other the meaning of the thing they were seeing in the east.

Murl spoke to Lize, who was standing in the door frame.

"Been a wonderful fall, hasn't it, Lize?"

"Yes, ain't it," Lize answered and moved to let him pass.

Old John moved restlessly and scowled toward the door. They were good friends, had helped each other in small ways, exchanged views and gossip—a front gate kind of friendship with definite conventions of civility. But old John had sunk into a condition which defied convention; he offered no other greeting than a grunt. Surprised, the younger man seated himself, talked pleasantly of local happenings, blundering on the things the old man wanted least to hear: the weather, its unusual beauty, the success of his season's work.

Outside the sky was darkening with that prodigious rapidity which accompanies long-delayed storms that seem to be making up time with the remorseless haste of overdue express trains. Inside the house the same dull

fly beat against the small-paned windows through which the long rays of the sun poured on the grimy papered walls.

The low rumble came again, nearer and more ominous.

"What's that?" exclaimed Murl, anxiously.

"Figgered it was you druggin' your boats up," John answered indifferently.

"It's thunder, Mr. Hawley."

The old man slowly took the pipe out of his mouth and turned to look doubtfully at the younger man. He was not sure he could believe him and when he saw behind him the open door, he knew he could not. He waved his pipe toward it disdainfully.

"Thunder? You're daft as the rest of these here young ones. Look at that sun." He slunk back into his chair. Murl was beginning to be nettled by the old man's persistent rudeness.

"It looked pretty threatening toward the east when I came in," he said.

"Smoke!"

"No, it wasn't smoke, either. It looked to me like a mighty bad storm."

"A bad storm, d'you say?" old John asked querulously.

Murl solemnly nodded his head. Old John raised himself slowly to his feet and hobbled into his own room where there was a window which looked out toward the east. He went to it and leaned his hand on the low sill. To the east and south the birch trees shone with an unreal whiteness against the black sky as if they had been picked out with white paint. The storm was approaching with incredible speed, and yet there was no wind. Old John watched silently for a long while, enjoying the

scene with morbid satisfaction. He thought of the grain down on the beach and of its inevitable ruin. It did not bother him. He spoke softly to himself with reverential rapture:

"By gawd, she's goin' to be a hell-bender. But I knowed she'd come. I knowed it."

At the front door Lize stood, horror-stricken with the first premonition of the impending disaster that would keep her starved for Jim another winter. On the beach the two boys looked at each other and then at the pile of grain, brought there with such an expenditure of happy, ill-considered labour. They shook their heads, it seemed so trivial now, and moved listlessly toward the house. Murl, understanding something of the loss impending, walked toward them to give what sympathy he could.

And then the wind came. A whining blast that bent the aspens before it and whipped the lake into a fury of small waves. A dead poplar crashed beyond the creek and at the edges of the field the bushes leaned far westward. A swirl of dust spun down the road, broke, and was flung toward the lake. A woodchuck scurried across the corner of the field.

Lize closed the door with difficulty and stood with her back against it.

"Paw," she cried. "It's goin' to be an awful storm. Somethin' terrible. Oh, Paw, ain't there nothin' we can do?"

The old man came to the door of his room, a peculiar smile playing across his face for one who has just watched ruination sweep toward him.

"Nothin' but sit here and enjoy her," he answered.

She ran to him and caught his shoulders with frightened, clutching fingers.

"But Paw," she pleaded, looking at him with eyes in which sheer terror showed. "All Jim's bags down on the beach. They'll be soaked through."

"They won't be worth a red cent when this rain gets at 'em. Might as well throw 'em in the lake."

He had no sympathy. The girl guessed it, although she did not know why, and she wrung her hands together and stumbled across the room where she looked through tear-blinded eyes toward the lake, with the wind-tossed road to the sun upon it, a beaten froth of gold.

Over head the loose old shingles rattled in the wind. The noise of them and the sounds of the storm outside brought the old man a holy joy. They vindicated him, his age and his experience. The righteous, leaning over the balcony railings in an orthodox Heaven, watching the torments of the damned in Hell, beneath them, must have some such splendid feeling. He sat down, content in the vicarious retribution of the approaching storm, and waited for the boys.

They came in after a few minutes, wet with the first gust of rain.

"Shut the door, Levi!" Jim said. "By the livin' twist she's a goin' to pour."

He looked for Lize, but she was standing inffront of the window, very rigid and forbidding, fighting to control her grief. Old John watched the boys slip dejectedly into chairs. He was in the center of the room, but they ignored him and each other. When someone spoke it was as if he talked to himself alone.

"Seems kinda funny it couldn't've kept offen us till we got that grain down," Jim muttered, hopelessly.

"Sorta shoots the whole summer's work to Hell, don't it," Levi said. "Think a' the times we rowed up here this summer buckin' a north wind. This is jest about give me enough o' farmin'. Goin' to get me a job out front in some fact'ry. Listen to her pour. Them old shingles won't stand much."

The wind whipped round the corner of the house and moaned in the spaces between the logs and window frames. A pane of glass, insecurely held by lifeless putty, long since dried and cracked, rattled pettishly against the muntins with the semi-personality inanimate things assume when roused to movement by some external force. The kitchen was in partial darkness. The leaden half-light of the storm obscured the corners and made the bowed figures vague hulks radiating gloom. There was a long silence such as comes when words seem futile or inadequate. It was broken by Lize asking in a strained voice, barely under control:

"You won't make a cent outen the summer, will you Jim?"

He shook his head despondently, and then rose, and clumsily took her in his arms. Murl, whose city life made him less of a fatalist than the backwoods people, broke the silence with indignant sympathy. He was profoundly sorry for them, and offered to do what he could to help. . . He noticed the old man, crouched in his chair before the stove.

"It's hard luck, Mr. Hawley," he said. "After all yours is the greatest loss. I wish I could do something."

"That's right, Murl," Levi added with a generous sympathy that forgot the old man's ceaseless grumblings. "The old lad's hit hardest."

Even Jim murmured something while he tried to comfort Lize. The old man listened and his eyes roved from one to another of the saddened group gathered in the dim shack to lament their misfortune and ponder on the useless villainy of the storm. At last he could restrain himself no longer; the humour of the situation was too delicious. He burst into a long peal of hearty laughter.

"Ha, ha! Listen to her. Comin' down like the whole Mishinog Lake was turned upside down. By gawd, she's a tunin'."

"Paw, stop that awful laughin'," pleaded Lize.

"You lads look good and mournful now, don't you, eh? And feel kinda mournful too. Didn't I say all them good days was weather breeders? Didn't I tell youse all them fine, beautiful days'd breed a storm like this here? Didn't I say we'd missed the equalnoxials and we'd pay for it?" His voice rose in its triumphant insistence. "When you lads've farmed, like me, for forty years, you won't be so damn cheerful when you see a spell of good weather."

The boys acted as if they had not heard, but Murl thought the old man insane to laugh at such a time.

"Mr. Hawley, you don't seem to appreciate your own loss. Get hold of yourself. Why, you're going crazy, man."

"Oh, no, I ain't," John assured him, cheerfully. "I ain't goin' crazy. It's them that is crazy. I was right

all along, wasn't I, youse young ones? Eh, Jim? Didn't I tell you, Jim?"

"Shut up," snapped Jim. "You've made life miserable for everybody in camp for most a month with your damn cheerless prophesyin'. You'd get a day from heaven, made by all the angels for God Hisself, and you'd get sour, and claim it was a weather breeder. You got your storm, damn it. Why can't you keep quiet and enjoy it? You're satisfied." He patted Lize's shoulder. "There, there, Lize, don't take on so. Your Paw's havin' a good time, anyways."

Levi edged toward the door.

"I can't stand this," he said to Murl. "Comin' out?"

They went out together and an angry gust of wind blew through the opened door. Jim did his awkward best to comfort the girl but she seemed inconsolable. The old man, oblivious to anything but his startling vindication at the hands of Nature, returned to the attack.

"I'll wager none of you young lads'll ever try to tell me I don't know what kind of a day it is again."

"Dry up," ordered Jim. "Can't you see Lize is bawling her eyes out? You may think a cloudburst a fine thing but you're the only one that does."

The insatiable old villain still lusted to hear a recantation.

"But I was right, Jim? Wasn't I right?"

But Jim, who had suffered greatly in silence, lost his temper at last. He strode toward the old man and tightened his fingers on the bony shoulders, shaking him as one shakes a dusty bag.

"Great gawd, YES," Jim shouted with his face close to old John's. "You was right. A million times you was right. If you'll only keep that sour trap of your'n closed, I'll say you was always right."

The old man made no effort to defend himself. He only seemed surprised that anyone should take such violent offence at his natural desire to have his prescience acknowledged.

"Ain't no need to take on so, Jim," the old man placated through his chattering teeth. "Ain't no cause to get mad, Jim. As long as you know I was right, I'm satisfied."

Jim loosed his hold but Lize, to whom this last remark seemed the crowning mark of insane cruelty, screamed at her father:

"You're satisfied? And how about us? How can we get married when you says you wouldn't let us until the grain was sold and Jim had a little money? There ain't any grain to sell. How about Jim and me, I'd like to know? We ain't satisfied."

"But that don't matter, Lize," Jim added bitterly. Your Paw's havin' such a good time outen this here storm. You oughta be happy he's cheered up. He'd been hell to live with all winter if they hadn't come some kinda calamity."

He took her in his arms protectingly, and glared defiantly at John.

"I got a mind to marry you anyways." He tried to see her face but it was hidden against his own chest. He brushed the soft hair with his lips, and leaned forward to speak closer to her ear. "Will you, Lize?"

She shook her head. He could not tell whether the answer was yes or no. Old John looked on, mystified and somewhat offended. He had only pointed out the correctness of his predictions, that was all. He saw no reason for the children attacking him so viciously. He had done nothing. But he felt uncomfortable and wanted to make things right with them.

"Lize," he said quite humbly. "Don't take on so, Lize. Don't rob youre old Paw outen the only fun he's got this fall." Lize gave no sign she heard him, and Jim's blue eyes kept their unwavering angry stare on him. He tried again. "Lize, I didn't know you and Jim wanted to get married that bad. There ain't no reason you two shouldn't get married if you want to."

"With the hull summer's crop down there soakin' on the beach with your damn weather breedin'? How can we get married?" Jim snorted.

Old John ran his fingers through his gray hair, apologetically.

"You could live down to the house, I s'pose, Jim. Lize's got to look after one of us and there ain't no reason why she can't look after us both."

Lize slowly raised her head and looked at her father, but she could tell he was in earnest by the very shyness of him. She flung herself upon him, danced up and down in front of him, pulled his stubby beard to draw his face nearer to her so she could kiss his wrinkled cheek. Her joy was so frank, so natural, and so unusual that it made the old man feel a little ashamed that he could be the cause of such emotion. But it filled him with a mighty pride as well. He was a power who could g ve or withhold happiness at will. And he was an unquestioned

authority on the weather, an acknowledged prophet whom no one would ever doubt again.

He took Lize in his arms.

Levi found them thus when he and Murl rushed in the door, tremendously excited.

"Jim! Jim!" he shouted. "It ain't hardly rained a drop. There ain't nothin' wet but the top layer, Jim. The storm's passed south o' here."

He rushed out again, and Lize broke away from her father to go and see the wonder for herself.

The shadow of a great disappointment stole slowly over the old man's face.

"Not rained a drop?" he quavered. "But we heard it, here on the roof."

"Must have been the shingles rattling in the wind," Murl told him over his shoulder. "We were just on the fringe of the storm."

Old John stood in the center of the deserted kitchen, trying to collect his thoughts.

"I don't believe it," he muttered, and slowly turned to seek his chair. On the far wall he saw the faint pattern of the window muntins, wan shadows against feeble sunlight. But while he watched, it strengthened, as the tattered edges of the storm were swept away, through yellow and orange, until the wall was stained the deep rich red of the setting sun when he promises a fair day tomorrow.

God, and Freud, might know why the old man chose the strawberries. Perhaps because they were sitting there, on the corner of the table. Perhaps because they were the same colour as the sun-stained wall. Perhaps because they were the only things he saw.

Whatever the reason, quite suddenly, he caught the tin dish in his two hands and hurled it against the wall.

"Set! you damned old weather breeder, set!" he raved, and obligingly enough, the sun slipped behind the western hills, leaving countless trickles of deep rich red dribbling down the wall paper.

THE CHASE OF THE TIDE

By NORMAN DUNCAN

THE enviable achievement in his sight was a gunwale load snatched from a loppy sea; he had never heard of a pirate or a clown or a motorman. From the beginning, he was committed to the toil of the sea; for he was a Newfoundlander of the upper shore—the child of a grey, solemn waste-place: a land of artificial graveyards. The lean rocks to which the cottages of Ragged Harbour cling like barnacles lie, a thin, jagged strip, between a wilderness of scrawny shrubs and the sea's fretful expanse. They deny, even, place for the dead to rot in decency: hence, inevitably, from generation to generation, the people of that barren match their strength against the might of tempestuous waters, fighting with their bare hands—great, knotty, sore, grimy hands; match, also, their spirit against the invisible terrors which the sea's space harbours, in sunshine and mist, by all the superstition of her children. In that isolation, virtue is not a voluminous mantle, cut *à la mode*, capriciously varying from period to period; but is, in truth, the grace of the strong. It chanced that Jo was the issue of a springtime arrangement—such as the gulls make—which, happily, had endured to the coming of a parson of passage four years later. He had been

brought forth like the young of the seal and the white bear, and he was nurtured into hardy childhood—into brown, lithe, quick strength—no more for love than for the labour of his hands. Obviously, then, he was committed to the toil of the sea.

This was disclosed to him—this and the sea's enmity—while he was yet in a pinafore of hard-tack sacking, months distant from his heritage of old homespun clothes.

"I 'low I cotches moare fish 'n Job Luff when I grows up," he boasted to Sammy Arnold, who had fished out of Ragged Harbour for sixty years, and was then past his labour. "I 'low I salts un better, too."

Sammy chuckled.

"I 'low," the child pursued, steadily, "I cotches moare'n you done, Uncle Sammy."

"Hut, b'y!" the old man cried in a rage. "They be moare quintals t' my name on Manuel's books 'n they be—'n they be—folk in the—the warld!"

They were on Lookout Head, waiting for the fleet to beat in from a thickening night; from this vantage Uncle Sammy swept his staff over the land, north to south, to comprehend the whole world.

"Iss?" said Jo, doubtfully. It was past his understanding; so he crept to the edge of the cliff to watch the black waves roll ponderously out of the mist, and shatter and froth over the lower rocks.

"The say do be hungry for lives this even," Uncle Sammy sighed.

"For me?" the boy screamed. "Is un?" He shrank from the abyss, quivering.

"He do be hungry this day."

Jo strode forward, as in wrath; then boldly he faced the sea, bearding it, with clinched hands and dilated nostrils.

" 'Tis good for un," Uncle Sammy laughed.

"They say woan't cotch me!" the boy cried. "I woan't let un cotch me!"

"He've not cotched *me*," Sammy said, serenely. He peered seaward; and for him it was as though the mist were the dust of past years.

"I woan't let un cotch me!" the boy cried again. He stumbled, in blind fright, to Uncle Sammy, and took his hand. "I woan't!" he sobbed. "I woan't . . . I woan't!"

It was the Mystery! "Skipper Jo, b'y," the old man whispered, "you be one o' they poor folk that can't 'bide the say. Little Skipper," he said, crooking his arm about the lad's waist, "never care. Iss, sure—you be one o' they the say cotches—like your fawther—iss, sure."

Thereafter Jo knew the sea for his enemy. But the perception was not always present with him; it was, indeed, to his spirit, like the eternal sound of the breakers to his senses—overshadowing, obscured, lost. For, as of course, in the years of idleness—numbering, from the suckling months, five—he had all the wisdom of children to glean and winnow and store; and that, in but small part, concerns many things—the ways of lobsters and tom cod, the subtle craft of dories, the topography of the wildernesses under broad flakes, the abiding places of star-fish and prickly sea-eggs, the significance of squid-squalls, and the virulence of squids. In the years that browned his face and yellowed his hair and brought him

boots of goatskin, a jew's harp, and a slicker, he had to learn of the activities of life much of a kind with this: In the morning—soon as the light spreads from the inland hills—men go out to fish, and, when they have fished many days, their wrists are swollen and festered, and the cracks in the palms of their hands are filled with hard, black blood; women never go out to fish, but, rather, stay ashore to milk goats, make boots, spin the sheep's wool, split wood, tend babies, spread the fish on the flakes, gather soil for the gardens, keep the stages clean, and cook potatoes and broose; children stand on tubs at the splitting table, to cut the throats of cod, and when, in the depths of night, they nod, through weariness, a man with a bushy white beard cries, "Hi, b'y! I'll heave a head at ye if ye fall asleep"—a cold, slimy, bloody cod head.

"They be a time comin'," was the burden of his thought in those days, "when I can't bide awake." So thinking, he would shudder.

Thence, to his tenth year, when all things were suddenly revealed, he wondered concerning many things; and chief among his perplexities was this: Where did the tide go? Where did the waters bide until they ran back through the tickle to cover again the slimy harbour bottom? It was a mocking mystery; ultimately, as shall be set down, it was like a lure to adventure cast by the sea. He wondered, also, what lay beyond the hills that rose, softly blue, far, far beyond the rocks where the bake-apples and juniper berries grew. The land was undiscovered; the wilderness between impenetrable. Who made God? God was uncreated, said the parson. That was incomprehensible. Did they use

squid or caplin for bait in the storied harbour called New York? Heigh, oh! The stranger had gone. Where did the tide go? Day after day it slipped out and crept back: and as, returning, it gurgled over the bottom, it mocked him again; and, as it turned and stole away, it enticed him to follow—far as need be. Oh, well! How could flour grow on blades of grass, as the stranger had said? Again, the stranger had gone. Was a horse as big as two dogs put together—big as Bob and Bippo? Tom Pearce, who had seen a horse in Green Bay, was with Manuel's schooner on the Labrador. Nobody else knew. But where did the tide go? Where did the waters bide? That was the nearest mystery. Truth, it was like a scream in the night.

"Hut, b'y!" said Uncle Sammy. "They be a hape o' curious things about the say. Sheer off from they. Iss, sure. The tide do goa in a hoale in the bottom."

Jo had abandoned that theory months ago; and so he puzzled, until, one day, when he and Ezekiel idled together, the punt slipped, at the turn of the tide, from under the laden flake, where the shadows are deep and cold, into the fading sunshine of the open harbour. Her shadow wriggled to the dull, green depths where the star-fish and sea-eggs lay; and the wary dories darted, flashing, into the security of the black waters beyond. She tugged at her painter like a dog at the leash—swinging fretfully, reaching, slacking with a petulant ripple; it was as though she panted to join the waters in the race through the tickle to the wide, free open. Now, the sea was here restrained from treacherous violence by encircling rocks; so, with rocking and ripple and amorous glitter, Jo was lured from the absent observation of a

lost kid—which, bleating, picked its way up the cliff to a ragged patch of snow—to a deeper contemplation of the mystery that lay beyond the placid harbour. The sea's ripple and glitter and slow, mighty swell; her misty distances, expanse, and hidden places; the gulls, winging, free and swift, in her blue heights; the fresh, strong wind blowing—these are an enticement to the thoughts of men. They soothe all fear of the sea's changeful moods, excite strange dreams, wake soaring, fantastic longings; and to those who look and hearken comes the impulse, and hot on the heels of the impulse the deep resolve, and after the deep resolve the perilous venture. It was so with the boy in the shute of the punt, lying with his head on a slicker and his eyes staring vacantly through the tickle rocks to the glistening distance.

"Now, b'y," Jo said, abruptly, "I knows!"

"Iss, b'y?" little Ezekiel answered from the bow.

"I 'low he heaps hisself up; an' 'twill be like climbin' a hill t' paddle t' the top."

"Iss, b'y?" Ezekiel was patiently sure of Jo's wisdom.

"The tide—he do."

"They be nar a hill t' the say," Ezekiel cried with scorn.

"You be oan'y a lad," Jo persisted. "I 'low he heaps hisself up."

"Where do he?"

"T'other side o' the Grapplin' Hook grounds, where he've no bottom."

" 'Tis barbarous far." Ezekiel regretfully glanced at the little schooner he had made. He had just rigged

the jib with pains; he wanted to try the craft out in the light wind.

" 'Tis not so far as the sun's hoale."

"Huh! 'Tis not so handy as Tailor's Nose."

Jo stirred himself. "Be your caplin spread, b'y?"

"Iss."

"Be un *all* spread, b'y?"

"Iss," plaintively.

"Us'll goa. Cast off!"

Ezekiel hesitated. "Be *your* caplin spread?" he demanded. Then, stern as a prophet, "God'll damn you t' everlastin' fire 'n you lie."

"You be cursin' God, Ezekiel Sevior!" Jo exclaimed. "God'll damn *you*. 'Tis marked down this minute—iss, sure." With impatience, "Us'll goa. Cast off!"

Ezekiel loosed the painter and sprang to the rowing seat; and Jo bent his strength to the scull-oar, and sent the punt clear of a jutting rock. Now, in these parts the tide has a clutch; the water gripped the boat and drew her out—swift and sly as a thief's hand. Soon the grip was fast; had the young strength—that now spent itself in guiding, to escape wreck on the Pancake—been turned to flat resistance, it would have wasted itself in vain. The waters hurried, leaping, eddying, hissing; they tightened their grip as they ran past Aunt Phœbe's flake, where Aunt Phœbe herself was piling her fish, against the threat of rain overnight—past the skipper's stage and net-horse, where the cod-trap was spread to dry in the sun, with a new and unaccountable rent exposed—past Jake Sevior's whitewashed cottage, set on a great rock at Broad Cove, where the pigs and chickens were amicably rioting with the babies in the kitchen.

And the tide as it ran may here be likened to the hand of a woman on a victim's arm: to her winks and empty chatter as she leads him from a broad thoroughfare to an alley that is dark, whence a darker stair leads to a place where thieves and murderers wait; for the north wind was heaping up a bank of fog behind Mad Mull, which stretched far out into the sea, and would soon spread it the length of the coast below. But to the children's sight the sea was fair; so they were swept on, singing:

The fire bust out in Bonavist' Bay.
Fol de rol, fol de rol !
Where was the fish and the flake nex' day ?
Fol de riddle rol, de-e-e-e !

An' 'tis Nick, bully Nick, Mister Nicholas;
An' 'tis Nick, Mister Nicholas, O !
An' 'tis Nick, Mister Nick, Skipper Nicholas ;
An' 'tis Cap-tain Penny, heigh oh !

Who made the fish for the fire to eat ?
Fol de rol, fol de rol !
Whose was the room what the fire swep' neat ?
Fol de riddle rol, de-e-e-e !

An' 'tis Nick, bully Nick, Mister Nicholas ;
An' 'tis Nick, Mister Nicholas, O !
An' 'tis Nick, Mister Nick, Skipper Nicholas ;
An' 'tis Cap—

"Lookit!" Ezekiel exclaimed, pointing to the shore. He was scared to a whisper.

" 'Tis Bob," Jo said. "Hark!"

Bob, a frowsy old dog with the name of a fish-thief, was in the shadow of a flake, howling and madly pawing the shingle.

" 'Tis the sign o' death!" Jo gripped the gunwale.

The dog howled for the third time; then he slunk off down the road with his clog between his legs.

"Josiah Butts—'tis he, sure!" Ezekiel exclaimed. "Noa; 'tis—"

"Iss; 'tis Josiah. He've handy t' five years too much t' the spread o' his mains'l."

" 'Tis Uncle Job Luff, b'y," Jo said, knowingly. "I heered un curse God last even."

Ezekiel started. "What did un say, b'y?" he insinuated.

"I heered un say—" Jo came to a full stop. "Huh!" he went on, cunningly. "Think o' all the cursin' you ever heered."

"Noa!" Ezekiel said, quickly. "Sure 'tis a sin t' think o' cursin'."

Jo grinned. Then, sadly, he said: " 'Tis Uncle Job—iss, sure. Poor Aunt 'Melia Ann!"

Ezekiel mused. "I 'low *'tis* Uncle Job," he agreed at last. "He've a rotten paddle to his punt."

Jo spread the sail, stretched himself in the stern, with his feet on the gunwales and a lazy hand on the scull-oar, and took up the song again:

An' 'tis Nick, bully Nick, Mister Nicholas;
An' 'tis Nick, Mister Nicholas, O!
An' 'tis Nick, Mister Nick, Skipper Nicholas;
An' 'tis Cap-tain Penny, heigh oh!

The sun was dropping swiftly, puffing himself up in his precipitate descent to the ragged black clouds that were mounting the sky, taking on a deepening, glowing crimson, the colour of flame in dense smoke. The woolly clouds in the east were flushed pink, mottled like a salmon's belly—a borrowed glory that, anon, fled, leaving a melancholy tint behind. Soon the whole heaven, from the crest of the black hills, far in the unknown inland, to the black horizon in the mysterious expanse

beyond the Grappling Hook fishing-grounds, was aglow: splashes of pink and gray and blue, thin streaks of pale green, heaps of smoky black and of gold, glowing, and of purple and violet and fiery red. The coast, high and rugged, with a low line of frothy white, and a crest of stunted spruce sloping to the edge of the precipice, was changed from dull green and duller grey to blood-red and purple and black; but this glorious mantle was soon lifted. In the white line there was one black space, the harbour mouth, whence the tickle led to the basin; and that space was like a rat-hole. On either side, from the tip of Mad Mull to the limit of vision in the south, the coast rocks were like a wall, sheer, massive, scowling, with here and there, at the base, great shattered masses, over which the sea frothed. The boat was headed for the sun; it was slipping over a gentle lop in a light wind. The weird, flaring sky—its darkening colours—the expanse of dull, red water, upon which the little boat bobbed as upon an ocean of thick cod blood—the isolation and impending night: all awed the boys. Their singing gave way to heavy silence, long continued, and silence to the talk of twilight hours.

"Rede me a riddle," said Ezekiel.

The demand startled Jo. The great descending night oppressed him; and he had been thinking of the tide, now a cold, frowning mystery. He eased the sheet and scanned the sea ahead. The sea was flat; there was no hill to be seen. He sighed, and said in a distracted way:

As I went up t' London Bridge,
I met me brother Jan;
I cut off his head an' sucked his blood,
An' let his body stan'.

"Jewberry," said Ezekiel with lack of interest.

"Uh-huh!" said Jo. Then, bethinking himself: "Oh!"

As I went up t' London Bridge,
I saw a mighty wonder;
Twenty pots a-bilin',
An' no fire under.

It was a new riddle in Ragged Harbour! "Who give it you, b'y?" Ezekiel cried.

"Granny Sevior," said Jo. "Iss, sure; when I took her some trouts. She do say she heered un when she were a maid. 'Tis a brook bubblin'."

Ezekiel marvelled.

From the body of fog that lurked behind Mad Mull, there dammed in its course from the north, a thick, grey mass overflowed and settled to the surface of the sea. A cloud, high lying, attenuated, impenetrable, rounded the point and crept seaward with the deviated current of the wind, its outmost parts swerving to the south, advancing slowly, implacably. Along shore, hugging the surface, a second silent cloud, impenetrable also, and immense, swept over the face of the waters to the Rocks of the Three Poor Sisters. The light scud, detached from the main body and driven before it, obscured the breakers, which, hitherto, had been in sharp contrast with rock and sea; the body that dragged itself after absorbed the distinguishing colour altogether, and thereafter nothing remained to mark the place. I may write: It was as though the sea's ally were relentlessly about its business—the one division stealthfully intent on interposing its opacity between the punt and the lurid sky, which was now glowing like the embers of a conflagration; the other swiftly proceeding to give ambush to the

breakers, and to hide the entrance to the harbour. Or, if you will, the fog was in the form of a gigantic hand, shaped like a claw, being passed cautiously over a table, to close on a careless fly.

"They be nar a hill t' the say, b'y," Ezekiel said, impatiently. He glanced apprehensively shoreward.

It had come to Jo that the abode of the tide was hidden of design—an infinite, terrible mystery. In the consciousness of presumption he quaked; but he gripped the scull-oar tighter and held the boat on her course for the sun.

"They be nar a hill 'tween here an' the sun," Ezekiel plainted.

They were sailing over the Grappling Hook grounds; and, as far as sight carried, the greying sea was flat.

"Us'll goa hoame, now, Jo," Ezekiel pleaded. " 'Twill be barbarous hard t' find the goaats in the dark."

"They do be a hill further out," said Jo. "Keep a lookout, b'y."

A rift in the clouds disclosed the sun as it sank—as it went out like a candle in a sudden draft. The arm of fog closed in on the boat; the shoreward cloud crept past the harbour and reached for Gull's Nest Point, a mile to the south, the last distinguishable landmark. The boys were silent for a long time. Ezekiel watched a whale at play to leeward; he wondered concerning his fate if it should mistake the punt for its young, as had happened to Uncle Sammy Arnold long ago, when there were more whales, and they were much, much bigger, as Uncle Sammy had said. Jo was sunk in the bitterness of realizing failure; he saw nothing but a surface of water that was flat—flat as the splitting table.

" 'Tis past the turn o' the tide," said Jo at last, like a man giving up hope.

"Iss, sure!" said Ezekiel, blithely. "Us'll come about."

"Us'll come about," said Jo.

The theory had failed. Jo headed the boat for shore. He shaped the course by Gull's Nest Point, measuring the shore from its fading outline to the probable location of the harbour; then he noted the direction of the wind, feeling it with his ear, his cheek, and the tip of his nose: fixing it, thus, in his mind. When he looked to Gull Nest Point again, the black mass had vanished.

"Job Luff do say," said Ezekiel, "that the tide bides in a hoale in the say."

"Noa!" said Jo, sharply.

"I 'low," Ezekiel said with some deference, "he've a hoale t' goa to."

"Noa, b'y!" Jo exclaimed, fretfully.

"I 'low he do," Ezekiel persisted with deepening politeness.

"Huh!" said Jo. "What 'ud come o' the fires o' hell?"

"Iss, sure, b'y," Ezekiel said in awe. "The tide 'ud put un out."

"Put un out," Jo echoed, sagely.

Ezekiel accounted for the heresy of Job Luff's theory thus: "Huh! Job Luff do be Seven Days 'Ventis'. Hell be for un—iss, sure."

The fog thickened. Night came on, an untimely dusk. Fog and night, coalescing, reduced the circumference of things material to a yet narrowing circle of black water. The feel of the fog was like the touch of a

cold, wet hand in the dark. The night was heavy; it was, to the confusion of sense, *falling;* it seemed to have been strangely vested with the properties of density and weight; it was, in truth, like a great pall descending, oppressing, stifling. Here is an awesome mystery; for the night has no substance; the mist, also, is impalpable! The fog, like the dark, is a hiding-place for shadowy terrors; it covers up familiar places—headlands and hills and coves and starry heavens—and secludes, in known vacancy, all the fantastic monsters that enter into and possess the imaginings of children in lonely times. Ezekiel, cowering in the bow, searched the mist for ghostly dangers—for one, a gigantic lobster, with claws long as a schooner's spars and eyes like the Shag Rock light. But Jo had no time for terror; he was fighting a fight that was already old, of which the history was written on the hand on the steering oar—a hand too small to span the butt, but misshapen, black at the knuckles, calloused in the palms, with the blood of cod congealed under the nails, and festering salt-water sores on the wrist. Time for visions of frothing lobsters? Jo had none. He was true son of that shore, and he had the oar and the sheet in his hands.

"Thick's bags," Jo remarked, alluding to the fog.

Ezekiel was silent.

Jo was steering by the wind; but the wind veered, scarce perceptibly, and the boy did not perceive the change at all. A crafty enemy! Thus was his childish inexperience turned against him. He had laid his course cunningly for the harbour before Gull's Nest Point had been wiped out; the course was now to the north by half a mile. With the deviation and drift he would meet

the coast at the Rocks of the Three Poor Sisters, where his father had struck in a blizzard years ago. The boy planned to take the punt within sound of the surf, then to ship the sail and creep along shore to the harbour. That was the one way; but it was a perilous way, for the surf, being hidden, and sounding near at hand, has no location. Its noise rises and subsides through long distances; its strength is here, there, elsewhere, everywhere, nowhere; it is elusive, confusing as a great noise. The surf also has a clutch; a foot beyond its grasp and it is to be laughed at; an inch within its eager fingers and it is irresistible. The breakers of the Rocks of the Three Poor Sisters are like long arms—their reach is great; their strength and depth and leap are great. There was no peril in the choppy sea over which the boat was now pushing; the peril was in the breakers. Watchfulness could evade it; but with every boat's length of progress Jo was plunged in deeper wonder. He was evolving a new theory of the tide, which was a subtle distraction. Was the spell of this mystery to undo him? Thus Jo; as for Ezekiel, he was afraid of the monsters he had conjured up in the mist, so—as his people invariably do in dread and danger—he turned to his religion for consolation. He thought deeply of hell.

"Is you been good the day, b'y?" Ezekiel asked, dreamily.

"Noa," Jo answered, indifferently. "I 'low I hasn't spread me caplin quite—quite straight."

The wind was stirring itself in the north. The dusk was thick and clammy. The sound of the surf had risen to a deep, harsh growl.

"Be you 'feared o' hell?"

"Noa," said Jo. "Lads doan't goa t' hell."

Momentarily Ezekiel thought himself in the company of the damned. He looked in new fright at the water, through which, his experience had taught him, most men found their exit from life.

" 'Tis a sin," he cried, "to' say it!"

"Sure, o' such be the kingdom o' heaven," said Jo, in continued serenity, maintaining his position with the word of the Book.

"Iss, sure!" Ezekiel was comforted.

The breakers seemed very near. Jo peered long into the tumultuous darkness ahead. Soon they could hear the hiss of broken waves. Jo freed the sheet and sprang for the mast. They furled the sail and stowed the mast. Jo took his place in the shute; he propelled the boat by the scull. Then Ezekiel's sight did not reach seven oar-lengths from the bow.

"Be you sure——"

"You be not goain' t' hell, Ezekiel Sevior!" Jo exclaimed, lifting his voice above the sound of the surf. "Doan't worry me."

The boat was advancing slowly, for the strength in the oar was slight. They were secure for the time, and they were not unused to the predicament; but at such other times the oar had been in larger hands, the lookout kept by more discerning eyes. They thought the harbour tickle was ahead, perchance some fathoms to the south or to the north. The wind had confused them utterly; the breakers were not the breakers of the Pillar and the Staff, but of the Rocks of the Three Poor Sisters. But they were not perturbed, so they fell again into

thought and long silence; and for Jo thought was the old, disquieting wonder.

"Ezekiel!" Jo's voice was husky, solemn; it had the thrill of triumph in it.

"Iss, b'y? Does you see the shoare?"

"*Ezekiel!*" Jo was exultant, like an investigator who beholds in wonder the beautiful issue of his research.

"Iss?"

Jo swung from side to side on the oar with a vigour stimulated by his exultation.

"I knows—iss, sure," said he.

"Where the tickle be? Does you?"

"Where the tide goas."

"Where do un goa?" Ezekiel asked, in mournful disappointment.

Jo pointed to the wash in the bottom of the boat as it slipped from stem to stern with the risen lop. Now the waters covered the boy's feet and gurgled and hissed under the stern-seat; now they swirled to Ezekiel's boots, sweeping along a chip and a spare thole-pin. Now the stern looked like the harbour basin at flood-tide; then the water receded, disclosing rusty nail-heads, which may be likened to the uncovered rocks, and a brown, slimy accumulation, which may be likened to sea-weed and ooze.

" Tis like the tide—'tis like un," Jo whispered.

The eyes of both boys were intent on the bottom of the punt, straining through the dusk. Jo still swung from side to side on the oar, an animate machine.

"Aye, b'y, sure," said Ezekiel.

"I found un out meself," Jo went on, solemnly. "I c'n tell Job Luff, now. He thought un were a hoale."

Jo laughed softly. " 'Tis noa hoale. 'Tis noa hill. 'Tis like *that.*"

Ezekiel watched the water ebb and flow. Jo watched the water ebb and flow. Both were in the grip of the mystery—of the great solution which had been yielded to them of all the world.

"When 'tis ebb in Ragged Harbour," said Jo, " 'tis the flood in—in—other pairts."

The discovery had fascinated their attention. Lookout and headway were forgotten.

"Where, b'y?" said Ezekiel.

"Pa'tridge P'int," Jo answered, readily. "What you sees from the Lookout in a fine time."

"It do be too handy; it——"

"Twillingate, then, I 'low," said Jo. "Where Manuel's trader comes from. 'Tis further'n any place."

Ezekiel turned to resume the lookout. Jo gloated in a long, low chuckle.

"Port! Keep un off!" The ring of terror was in the scream. "Port! Port!"

"Aye b'y," firmly spoken.

Ezekiel rose in the bow and raised his hands as though to push the boat back from a danger.

"Port! Port!"

"Aye, b'y."

The Rock of the Third Poor Sister took black, towering form in the mist, before and overhead. The punt paused on the crest of a declivity of rushing water. The white depths were like an abyss; she was like a man clinging to the fringe of a precipice. It was a time for the strength of men; in that swift pause the strength of a child's arms was as no strength.

"The sea've cotched us!" Jo muttered. "The sea—he've cotched us!"

The wave ran its course, broke with slow might, fell with a crash and a long, thick hiss.

Ezekiel sank to the seat and covered his eyes with his hands, but Jo dropped the oar, and bearded the rock and the wave as he had done in the days when he wore a pinafore of hard-tack sacking, and he clinched his hands, and his nostrils quivered.

"The sea—he've cotched me," he said again; and it was like a quiet admission of defeat at the hands of a long-fought enemy.

The returning body of water slipped like oil under the boat; it fastened its grip at the turn, lifted the boat, lost it, caught it again, swept it with full force onward and downward.

"Mother!"

Ezekiel had forgotten his God. He cried for his mother, who was real and nearer. God had been to him like a frowning shape in the mist.

How shall we interpret? Where is the poet who shall now sing the Sea's song of triumph? Who shall ascribe glory to her for this deed? Thus, in truth, she bears herself in the dark corners of the earth. These children had followed the lure of her mystery, which is, to the people of bleak coasts, like the variable light in false eyes, like a fair finger beckoning. It was as though the Sea had smiled at their coming, and had said to the mist and the wind, "Gather them in." Neither strength nor understanding had been opposed to her treacherous

might. They had been overwhelmed. Was there honour in this triumph? In the wreckage and little bodies that the waves flung against the rocks for a day and a night, lifting them, tossing them? In the choked lungs? In the bruised faces? In the broken spine? In the ripped cheek? In the torn scalp? In the glazed blue eyes? The triumph was cruel as vanity; or, if it were not of the pride of strength, such as is manifest in an infant spitted on a lifted spear, but, rather, of greed, it was wanton as gluttony. If there be glory to the Sea, it was glory of hidden mercy; indeed, isolation and toil are things to escape. But if there be no glory, whose is the reproach? Thine, O Sea!

REMEMBRANCE

By WALTER McLAREN IMRIE

THROUGH the unshuttered windows of the ward, the shadows of the late afternoon steal quietly in. The Sergeant stirs restlessly in his bed. Above him hangs the Military Medal, and a last, lingering sunbeam, quivering obliquely on the bare white wall, touches the deep colours of the ribbon with wayward hands, and suddenly departs. Slowly the shadows lengthen.

The Sergeant's eyes are closed, and his dark lashes lie like twilight on his still face. He is a glorious lad—as splendid in his young manhood as an Athenian marble. In the gathering dusk, he assumes an almost luminous pallor. It is as though his departing spirit were already casting about him a halo of transplendent light. Softened by approaching death, his features have assumed the deep impress of the final sleep, and folded above his heart, his hands lie nerveless and attenuated, like withered lilies.

For seven days I have watched his chart, but the hieroglyphic lines of temperature and pulse give no encouragement. Apparently there has been no resistance voluntarily offered, no heroic effort made; it is as though he knew the futility of hope, and, in his heart, was very glad—and waited. Some men fight their battles inch by inch; some men, not at all.

In the morning, and in the afternoon, and then at night, I do his dressing. He seldom speaks, so it is difficult to say just what degree of suffering he endures. Only once or twice have I found his dark eyes upon me, as I worked, and then, his gaze was so remote, so utterly removed, that to have challenged him, and brought him back to the grey horror of reality, would have seemed a desecration, almost, of some dim, spiritual aloofness of his own. So we have gone on, patiently, and in silence.

The surgeons have done what they could for him—probed and drained, and given blood transfusions; but from the very start, his chance was wretched. In his left lung there lies a great, torn fragment of shrapnel, and when he coughs, it turns and writhes within him, lacerating its way through muscle and tissue, and severing the vessels that obstruct its course. Then, stains of crimson steal across his lips, and, presently, great basins brim with his own blood . . .

After supper, the trays are cleared away, the men quiet down, and the Medical Officer comes on his nightly round. Captain Bartholomew studies the Sergeant's chart, takes his pulse and temperature, and then calls me aside.

"I think we'd better have screens to-night, Corporal —he can't last very much longer, at this rate."

So I bring the screens and put them about the Sergeant's bed. The other men look on, unmoved, and whisper between themselves in a low monotone.

At nine o'clock, I fetch my dressing-tray from the instrument cupboard. The ward is very quiet now, and many of the men are asleep. With a soft, kindly radiance, the lamp-light floods the screen-enclosed area.

The Sergeant's eyes are open, and he is moving his hands about, over the coverlet.

"Here we are again, old man!—You look pretty fit, to-night. Feeling better?"

"Oh,—I don't know—thanks." He turns his head wearily towards me, and tries to take an interest in what I am doing. His black hair looms like a shadow on the pillow.

I unbutton the coat of his pyjamas, and carefully remove the surgical pads that cover his wound. His body is burning to the touch—like the beating of the sun on a mid-summer's afternoon. Apparently his fever is up again, on one of its periodic flights. Surely the end—the beginning of the end—is near.

The dressing takes some twenty minutes. When I have finished, and am gathering up my basins and tubes and instruments, and am about to depart, a waxen hand strays out from the bed, and detains me. I put down my tray on the floor.

"Yes, old man; what can I do for you? A drink?"

The Sergeant negatively closes his eyes, and then slowly opens them.

"No, I'm not thirsty, thanks, Corporal. I only wanted to know—if you'd—come back—and sit with me awhile—for, you see—I'm dying—to-night—and it's lonely here—behind these screens."

I take both his hands in mine, and hold them fast.

"We're not afraid, old pal. Try to sleep. I shall not leave you."

Thus draws his mortal day to its close.

Towards eleven o'clock, he passes into a light delirium. His dreams are broken, disjointed—dim memories of

dead days, lived long ago, and ever at their heels, urging them on, blood-stained remembrances of the more immediate past—the far prairies of his native Canada, gloriously golden under their Autumn harvest of wheat; his mother, patiently waiting; his brother; the battlefields of the Somme. A little strangled sob floats upwards for an instant, and dies in fluttering accents.

At midnight he rouses, and I give him water to drink. Thereafter, he seems easier, and does not care to sleep; so I talk to him quietly of Canada—of the prairies and the mountains and the sea—of the beauty and the gladness—that is *home*. Patiently he holds my hand, and listens. Backward I lead him, step by step, in memory.

When I believe him to be at the very verge of sleep, his fingers suddenly close hard on mine, and he stirs uneasily beside me.

"It's Eric, though, Corporal," his voice is very faint and I must stoop to hear, "Eric, my brother, that I'm longing for. Can't you see—he's dead, and I've been waiting for him—all this time."

What can I say? The cold hand trembles in my own.

"He was only a kid—was Eric—seventeen. Mother should never have let him go: but God, how he loved me—better than life itself—and he *would* come along. All his life before him,—and *happy*,—why, he never knew a care!—It seems years ago to me, now.—Only seventeen when he died! God,—the pity of it all!

"I was with him the morning he was killed; we'd never been apart, he and I,—just pals,—and he was a proper soldier, too, even though he was a kid.

"Yes, I've lived it all over a good many times, since I've been lying here,—that day he died.—I've only got

to close my eyes, and Gad!—I'm back on that old road again, with Eric beside me on the gun-carriage. We were drivers, you see,—he and I,—in the Somme. Been through some pretty heavy fighting, too.

"I'll never forget that day,—the heat and the dust. There wasn't a breath of air. The old girl lumbered along, rattling and clanking like all-possessed. First, we were up on one wheel, and then we were down on the other.—And what a road!—pools of water, green with slime, and shell-holes a horse could break his leg in.—The dust rose and fell like smoke, around us: we were grey with it,—we breathed it in with every breath. It drifted in shuddering clouds,—hung motionless in the still air. At times, we could not see the man ahead of us,—our own horses, even."

Faint, the Sergeant pauses for an instant, and his eyes slowly open. They mirror a horror,—a remembrance, that is beyond human words.

"The kid was half-asleep, you see, hanging on beside me, and jolting about. The sun was in his eyes, and he'd been up all night, besides. I tried to watch him,—God knows,—had my arm around him, most of the time, so that he could put his head down on my shoulder, and sleep more easily.—It was all play to him; like a boy, he was tired out, and wanted to forget.

"Then—we struck a crater!—God, I thought we'd never stop; down and down, slipping and sliding. The horses were wild with fear. Struggling to hold them back, I wrenched my arm from the kid.—It only lasted a moment;—then, slowly, the great gun righted itself,—the wheels groaned, the chains pulled taut.—Out of the

dust beneath me,—suddenly there came a cry! I looked for Eric;—he was gone!"

The Sergeant's eyes fill slowly with tears. They course unheeded down his wan face. He makes a supreme effort to regain his self-control. Out of his increasing weakness, and the mists of delirium, which are slowly gathering again, he wrests a final moment of lucidity.

"I left the horses standing, and went back.—At the bottom of the crater, I found him, face-downward in the dust, his arms spread out before him. There was blood on the sand,—great pools of it, that quickly sank and disappeared.—The wheels had gone over his chest,—poor kid, but his hands were still twitching when I reached him,—clawing the sand, and digging themselves in.—I tried to lift him up in my arms, but he was bent, and broken, and twisted. His blood poured over me,—my hands, my tunic. It was on my lips, and my eyes were blinded with it.

"Then, they shelled us, there on the road, as I was burying him, and—and—"

Exhausted, he falls back. The watch, hanging above his head, ticks away the moments, listlessly. An oppressive silence weighs upon me. In the dim light, I conjure the terrible scene,—the devastated road, the shimmering veils of dust and heat, the crater, the plunging gun-carriage, the body, the sand, the blood.

I cannot breathe, and rise to go. The lifeless hand slips from my own. On the pale cheeks, the tears are slowly drying, leaving faint, brackish stains.

From the wall I take down the Military Medal, and place it between the relaxed fingers of the waxen hands.

His eyes are glazing rapidly. The broken dreams rush headlong through his brain;—the Somme; the far prairies of his native Canada, gloriously golden under their Autumn harvest of wheat;—his mother, patiently waiting;—his brother.

Calmly, serenely, the lamp-light throws a dim radiance about him.

THE MAN WHO SLEPT TILL NOON

By WILL E INGERSOLL

DAVE DUNCAN broke his egg over his potatoes, mixed the two constituents in his dish into a kind of paste with the blade of a table-knife, and took a generous mouthful—off the knife-blade. Dave never used a fork unless the meal was a hurried one, necessitating what he termed "feedin' from both sides".

He was a healthy, stolid, settled man of forty-odd, who lived steadily and soberly from day to day, and did not care much how he looked or whether he was considered good company by the rest of his family, so long as his meals were ready on time, his socks kept mended, and a clean shirt handed to him on Sunday morning. His face told, if it told very much of anything, of a nature that resisted and had always resisted, asbestos-like, the taper-touch of any of those things that burn through cold practicality to the blood of the heart. His forehead sloped inward from the temples to a flat-topped head on which the thick hair, washed but not combed, bristled in a soapy tuft. His eyes were granite-coloured, short-lashed, and placidly expressionless; his lower face heavily fleshed, with a coarse brown stubble covering throat and chin and hedging the phlegmatically munching aperture of mouth. Nothing anywhere to win a second

glance. A homely face, run to excess of homeliness because its owner had no care otherwise.

Perhaps one may be surprised, after reading this description, to be told that Dave Duncan was not a bachelor, and that the "rest of his family", to which allusion has been made, referred not to brother or sister, but to a family which he had started "on his own".

The rest of Dave Duncan's family consisted of one—the little wiry, competent working-machine of a "home" girl he had brought to his farm, by right of casual matrimony, a little more than a year previously. Lottie Duncan, who was less than half her husband's age, had been before her marriage a hired girl on an adjoining farm, a handy little body, who could cook and mend and iron, and bake bread, and had never, since she was in short dresses, lacked opportunity of practice in these housewifely accomplishments.

Duncan had married her because that had seemed the cheapest way of getting a woman to keep house for him and milk his cows. Lottie, who, in spite of a few faint, premature lines resulting from the cares of her kinetic and assiduous days, had not been without a certain neat prettiness, had taken Dave because he "had his place paid for". Tommy Phillips had wanted her badly; but Tommy was a landless, happy-go-lucky boy who "worked out", and Lottie's practicality—one characteristic she shared with her husband—preferred a middle-aged freeman to a youthful vassal.

This is not to go on to say that now she was beginning to regret her choice. On the contrary, Lottie did not regret it. She was perfectly satisfied. If the thing had been to do over again, she would have done exactly the

same. Everything was working out completely according to plan. Lottie was now keeping strict and business-like tab on the farm accounts, checking the store bills, keeping the farm-house orderly as "a new pin", raising the calves—running the woman's end of farm operation without let or criticism. The house of Duncan had never known a domestic quarrel.

But Lottie, little Lottie, was changing, changing pathetically, but by a transition so gradual that she herself, busy and unintrospective little person that she was, did not notice it at all. At twenty, she was drying and solidifying into dour, drab middle-age. She was becoming like her husband. His monotony, like a slowly lowered extinguisher, was putting out the tapers, the sparkles and piquancies, that had made sweet and grateful to the eye the vestal altar of her maidenhood. Her eyes, for instance, that in the opening days of their married life, before his influence had begun to make itself felt, had looked brightly and "cutely" across their neat post-nuptial table, now returned his glance with something of his own log-like phlegm. Her voice had lost its sprightly inflection, its struggling coquetry, and had become almost as dreary, droning, and monotonous as his own. She had become his truly consistent partner in his stale enterprise of living.

Dave Duncan's egg and potatoes exchanged their location on his thick, blue-bordered plate for a spacious and corporeally profitable housing-place between his front and rear suspender-buttons. He poured his tea into his saucer, rippled its surface in careful preamble with a cooling suspiration from his stubby lips, and drank it with intermittent raisings of his shock eyebrows.

Then, piling and pushing aside his plate, saucer, and cup, he shoved his chair back a little, stuck between his teeth the pipe that during the dinner interval had lain beside his elbow on the oil-cloth table cover, squared his forearms in the space vacated by the dishes, and looked toward his wife with his granite eyes.

Lottie Duncan, her posture patterned in a comical, unconscious way after his own, except that one hand, small, blunt-fingered, and red, was knuckled beneath the little face with its intent tilt and busy presentness of expression, looked at the same moment in her husband's direction. Their glances did not meet, but crossed each other, as it were, in two downward, diagonal eye-rays that intersected just above the empty egg-plate in the centre of the table.

"Yes," said Lottie, "I guess we *will* be needin' a man, this spring, Dave."

It did not surprise Duncan that his wife had picked the thought out of his mind as easily as one lifts a spoon out of an offered tumbler. Thought—plain, workaday thought, nothing fancy—was becoming communal, in a way so gradual and natural as to be below wonder, in this dour domestic firm of Duncan & Duncan.

"Wurk's a kend o' heavy, y' see," the farmer monotoned, as if it was himself who had made the original remark, "sence wur puttin' in th' pre-emption this year. See an' tell Lavery's, when yur in town to-day, that we need a man."

Lavery was the storekeeper at Seeburn (from which place, it may be remarked, one could see no burn nor brae nor anything more picturesque than an alkali flat, crossed by a trail along whose clinging saline ruts one

gladly escaped from Seeburn, even though it cost a pull—to the horses—to leave the hamlet). If you wanted to rent a farm—tell Lavery's. If you wanted to buy a good "quarter" or "half" or "section o' land"—tell Lavery's. If you wanted to trade a fine-looking, though balky, horse for one who was a plug to look at but of assured locomotive tendencies—tell Lavery's. If you wanted to hire a good man at boy's wages—tell Lavery's. The firm—which consisted of Bill (Baldie) Lavery, the Missis, and (after school was out) Buzzie of the blond braids—charged no commission for its services. All it asked was that you send no business to the mail-order houses. If you were one who sent trade out of town, you could, of course, still "tell Lavery's" and still be received with a silken courtesy by any of the three partners and have your needs duly noted down—because in every deal there must be some one to get the short end, and you, in this case, would be that necessary party.

Thrifty Lottie Duncan ordered everything, except immediate necessaries, by mail. From the Seeburn postmaster, who had often made Lavery glow (or glower) through the mail wicket by displaying with a wink and grin one of the mighty catalogues seasonally addressed to the house of Duncan, Lavery's knew of these transactions. Sometimes, in a mysterious way, Lavery's knew even the amount and variety of the order that "went through" each spring and fall.

Therefore, after Lottie Duncan, taking with her the spool of thread, the box of matches, and the plug of tobacco that had been her excuse to call at Lavery's about "help", had left the store that Saturday afternoon,

Baldie Lavery called to him the Missis and Buzzie, and said:

"Loak o' thot."

He spread out on the counter the scrap of paper on which he had noted down the Duncans' need of a hired man.

"Pratty staat o' things," Mr. Lavery observed, rubbing the butt of his lead-pencil hissingly against his whiskered chin-end; "they people theer sattin' a pattern to haalf t' coontryside to send traade away—then coomin' a-here an' askin' we to get they a mon. But us'll get they a mon nottastannin'. Us'll get they a *prize* mon. Eah, Buzz?" and the senior partner of Lavery's, pronouncing the "u" in his daughter's name as the "oo" in "wool", playfully tweaked Miss Lavery's pretty ear.

"We will, father," Miss Buzzie, her dialect slightly modified by her Western schooling, answered promptly, slipping an arm around each of her parents. "We'll send them Bert."

"Bert?" Mr. Lavery glanced over his glasses interrogatively. "Oh, aay—t' yoong lod o' the staable? Him as cooms here, mother, to coort our Buzz. Ey, us'll send they Bert. Hoa! hoa! hoa!" Mr. Lavery leaned back against the coffee-mill and laughed till that utensil rattled on its loose counter-bolts.

Bert, an easy-mannered, athletic, nomadic fledgeling of twenty-three, to whom life was just one picnic after another, took, however, some persuading before he could be induced to exchange intermittent work at Jim Hanna's for the prospect of steady work on a farm.

"Nah," he said in his don't-care, hobbledehoy drawl, when the matter was first laid before him next day at the store, "I'd be n' good on a farm."

"Tha'rt noa good anywheer," said Mr. Lavery, frankly, "except ta throa doost in t' eyes o' t' lasses"; and the head of Lavery's winked cordially at Miss Buzzie, who stood, her school-books under her arm, on the same side of the counter as young Bert.

"Buzzie Lavery," said the Missis, who did not think this rallying wise in view of circumstances, " 'tis time tha wur awaay to t' school. Loak at t' clock theer!"

Bert, to whom Miss Buzzie Lavery loomed at that time in her most vivid stage as one of his procession of passing fancies, and with whose elusive self he might even have fallen in love (as the eagerness bred in youth kept guessing is sometimes miscalled) if the opaque conceit of his time of life had let him see how far he was from being really regarded seriously by the shrewd daughter of the house of Lavery, looked after her regretfully as she moved toward the door. His hope that she would turn for a parting glance was realized. Pausing with her hand on the door-knob, Miss Lavery, presenting her blue eyes to him fetchingly between down-tilted hatbrim and shoulder, said in a voice reduced to just the proper cadence of coaxing:

"Go on, Bertie. Do as feyther says. A staable's no place for a fine lad like you to serve out his daays in."

So it came about that, shortly after dinner-time on the day following her trip to town, Lottie Duncan, stopping her garden-rake a moment at the end of a seed-bed, found presented to her casual scrutiny a figure

approaching from the road-allowance gate. The shoulders of the figure swung nonchalantly; the legs resembled, in a slightly modified way, the handle of her implement of cultivation; the head, at intervals, exuded smoke as does a stove when the check-damper is turned suddenly against a strong draught.

"Good day, lady," said Bert, the cigarette in his mouth jibbing spasmodically with his utterance; "I want a job."

There! the distasteful thing was said and over with in as few words as possible.

Lottie turned back the brim of the old masculine felt hat she wore, and looked up at him. Bert, with a faint quickening of interest, noted that the "lady of the house" at this place where he had sentenced himself to imprisonment with hard labour was young, not old and dingy, as he had anticipated. Noting this, he removed his cloth peak-cap ostentatiously and, taking his cigarette out of his mouth, held it politely to leeward.

Lottie's mind, as she watched these acts of deference and surveyed the doer of them, involuntarily reverted to the years before she had a husband who kept his hat on all the time except when in bed, and smoked at her as though she were a wall or a fence-post; whose hair bristled unkemptly instead of tumbling in comely disorder about his temples and ears; whose self-contained granite eyes held no pin-end of light, like a softly blown spark, in each iris. It was perhaps Lottie Duncan's first backward glance since her materially satisfying marriage.

"Have you et?" she said.

Bert set his hat decorously back over his wavy tonsure.

"Oh, a bite, at the hotel," he said; adding quickly, to remove any possible vestige of misunderstanding, "just a bite."

"Come in," said Lottie Duncan.

A few moments later Duncan's wife, turning from setting the tea-canister back into the cupboard, looked toward the healthy young nomad plying zestful knife and fork at the farm-house table. In its original intention, Lottie's look had been merely a casual and housewifely glance at his plate to see if it needed replenishing. But somehow she found it hard to take her eyes away again from that young, fresh-coloured face, those long legs carelessly a-sprawl beneath the table, those virilely squared shoulders that leaned above his plate.

Lottie Duncan had entered thoroughly into her husband's viewpoint of the future. More land—bigger crops—more money. They did not think of this money as a medium to buy luxuries, or to purchase the ultimate right to rest when their bodies should be drying and yellowing toward the reaping-time. The farmer, born and bred to that estate, is the one type among the world's workers into whose contemplation rest does not enter. He goes contentedly down the years in harness, just as his horses go. The inevitable odd incident of death finds him, as it were, between plow-handles. The only idea Dave and Lottie Duncan had as to a possible future use for their money had been expressed in a suggestion of Dave's, one reflective evening, that "maybe we'll take a jolt East an' see the old place, some day, if we get the time."

So Lottie, born and pre-fashioned a farmer's wife and helpmate, had put away without great effort her right to

receive youth's gallantries at the age when these offerings are sweetest. But she had not, and of course could not, put away capacity to appreciate them. It was, therefore, somewhat good to have this young man remind her, as he had by his attitude out in the garden and as he continued to do from his place at the table, that she could still command attention from pernickety twenty-three.

Something exhaled from him that was meaty and potent-flavoured to her young-woman palate, something that defied insensibility, something that made her turn away a little guiltily from the reckless matter-of-course homage in Bert's bold brown eyes.

"You better go out an' see—him," she said, her back turned, "when you're done eatin'."

After the boy, hat on the side of his head, lips pursed in a whistle, had gone off to the thirty-acre field up and down which Dave Duncan was moving steadily and stolidly behind his soft-rattling seed-drill, Lottie Duncan gathered up the dishes from the table, put them in the dish-pan, and poured over them hot water out of the kitchen kettle.

Somehow, that hot water felt good to her hands, as she sank them into it. The half-filled caloric pan, with its white litter of submerged porcelain, became a core of comfort in that scrubbed, sterile, bleakly tidy farm-house kitchen. Lottie Duncan's eyes were scaled of their emotionless glaze. The soft, contemplative hazel-gray came out, lighting her little face as the dawn the sky.

It was a new-washed and piquant countenance, touched with the pink of expectation, that looked out

over the lea that evening, as Duncan's wife hung out from the upper window the red blanket that was the supper-signal to the men on the far black square of fallow. Lottie had left off for the time her long, shapeless blue-and-white check apron, and had clad herself in the neat white waist and skirt of Sunday afternoon. She had pinned up the hair about her bird-like small head with a knack long unexercised. The lace collar she had put on was drawn down into a low "V" at the throat and secured there with a silver brooch.

Lottie could not herself have explained why she had, on this unsingular workday evening, marshalled all these embellishments in their joint naive appeal. It was just a "notion" she took, she would probably have said.

Somewhat expectantly, she awaited the arrival of the men. When, however, they had hungrily arrived, had washed themselves at the basin in the porch, and had taken chairs at the table, Lottie dallied in the neighbourhood of the stove, protracting her dishing-up of the meat and potatoes. She had so seldom, in these prosaic latter days, tricked herself out for any occasion except her routine churchgoing on Sundays, that she was shy of being looked at.

"Come on, Lot," Dave Duncan's monotone had a barely perceptible note of impatience; "whur's them supper-things?"

Eyes lowered, and cheeks a little warm, the junior partner of Duncan & Duncan brought over the plate of fried meat and the vegetable-dish of boiled potatoes. As she set these down her husband "took notice" with mild ox-like surprise, that the meat-plate was garnished with green sprigs of water-cress. He noted also, as

presently she fetched the tea, that this had been brewed in the long unused china pot belonging to the set of dishes that had been her wedding-present from her former mistress. Duncan made no comment, however, for appetite became his possessing interest as the savoury odour of the "supper-things" filled his nostrils. Helping himself liberally first, he pushed the meat-dish toward young Bert.

Bert was hungry, too, hungrier than he had ever been that he could remember, but he nearly spilled the gravy in trying to help himself and at the same time take surreptitious survey of the "lady of the house".

Lottie Duncan, although the drab and practical concerns of her business of marriage had made her temporarily dull and hueless, held yet within her well-nourished little person the pleasing potentialities of womanhood in the early twenties. It had only needed a little pique and incentive, a little of the sunshine and dew of recognition, to cause her to bloom again in coloured cheek and brightening eye. Bert continued to steal glances at her between mouthfuls; and already, in his free-necked mind of boy-time that knew no law but liking, a new "passing fancy" was pushing Buzzie Lavery from the seat of honour.

The main post-supper chore on the Duncan farm was the milking of Daise, Bess, and Lill—staid lacteal containers all, as sober as the man that owned them and the shaggy old collie, seven-summers-wise that herded them leniently each evening to the milking-pen.

But the most tractable cow regards in an armed way a new milk-master—especially an unconventional and undignified one who diverts himself by rattlingly playing

catch with his tin strainer-pail as he approaches the scene of his endeavour. So Daise, the mother of the Duncan herd, although suffering Bert to "strip" her for an arduous half-hour, did not "let down" into her udder any more fluid from her milk-veins, though filled to bursting-point, than she could without undue discomfort retain.

"Well, now—is that all she'd give you?" exclaimed Lottie, who, having long ago finished milking Bess and Lill, had been waiting patiently in the milk-house, with the cream-separator all set up and ready, till Daise's contribution arrived. "That's not the half, nor yet the quarter, of what Daise gives. Why, she's only just freshed a month or so ago."

"Ya, that's every last straw she has in the loft, seemin'ly—honest, it is," responded Bert, carelessly. He set down the pail, with its blue-white minim of milk in the bottom, and caressingly laid a cigarette to his lips. "How you comin' up, anyway, Missis? Say, you got a spot o' milk on your chin. Let's rub it off."

But Lottie, out of the deep experience of young men gained in her "free" former days, stepped quickly away as Bert, handkerchief-corner ostentatiously ready, approached her.

"Did you ever run a separator?" she said, setting her hand on the bowl of the machine.

"Hundreds of 'em," rejoined the youth, gripping the crank as he spoke, and hauling it around with reckless vigour.

"Well, then,"—Lottie stepped forward hastily to the succour of her well-kept dairy machine—"you ought to know that's no way to start it. Turn easy until you

get up speed; then don't go any faster than sixty turns a minute. There—that's better."

"I'm a hog for work," commented Bert as his shapely torso rose and fell gracefully to the revolution of the handle, "ain't I?"

"You run through what milk's there," said Lottie, picking up the pail he had set down, "while I go down to the corral and finish Daise. I'll be back before you're done."

Big, crooked-horned Daise sighed with contentment as her mistress's practised fingers gripped her teats, and yielded her milk in grateful plenitude. As the alternate jets of white flashed frothing into the strainer-pail Lottie Duncan, lapsing into the thought-glow that attends upon busy mechanical movement, found in her mind the vague whisper of an ancient regret she had imagined silenced forever.

It was hardly seven hours since this "crazy lad"—as Lottie half affectionately termed him in a musing ejaculation—had stepped into her ken; yet in that short interval he had come nearer to her than the staid, self-absorbed, granite-eyed man with whom she had lived—lived, too, in the utter intimacy of wifehood—for more than a year. She must check-rein this boy, must (for little Lottie was, above all, an honest wife and an honest woman) hold him within the proprieties; but, within due bounds, there was no special reason why she should not, in her youth's hunger, let him be companion and playmate.

Ah! how good the sparkle of him was—the glint, the bounce, the bonny and gay agility of mind and impulse—how forgivable even his boldness! For this last was not

the evil, selfish, deliberate boldness of the old or the experienced. It was merely a boy's spontaneity, a boy's careless and playful challenge to circumstances.

Too early, she saw clearly, had she cut short her playtime, too soon settled into the staid and serious noon of living. But here was fun, innocent fun, to be had for the free-and-easy taking. She would take it—she would! She would have another run in the sun—hair down, hat-strings flying, skirts ankle-high, as it were. She was only a girl yet—and the years were coming on apace when she could never be a girl again, when ahead there would be only life's lessening afternoon, with its ultimate sunset and—night.

Lottie Duncan's eyes flashed approvingly as she returned with her brimming pail to the milk-house and noted that some instinct of fidelity to a playfellow had kept lazy Bert faithfully at work. The separator-bowl was spinning with a rich and cheery hum, the milk reservoir nearly empty.

"Welcome to our city," was the operator's rather breathless greeting. "Say, I thought you was never comin'. This job's worse'n loadin' gumbo."

"You must be weak, for the size of you," Lottie flung at him as she emptied Daise's milk into the reservoir and took hold of the crank, which young Bert relinquished with considerable alacrity; "why, I have to do this every night, with no one to spell *me* off — See here, now; you stop that! Stop, I tell you!"

This last very briskly, sharply, and decisively, as Bert's freed hand attempted to rest for a moment about her waist.

"All right—go ahead turning, and show us how it's done." Bert's tone conveyed a slight swagger, but the offending hand was promptly removed. He composed himself on the bench beside the empty milk-pail, and lighted a fresh cigarette.

Lottie had just commenced to turn the separator-handle when there was a step outside and Dave Duncan's sphinx-like face thrust in through the low door. Remembering her reflections while milking, Lottie could not help flushing a little as she looked around. But it was not suspicion that had brought dull Dave to the dairy.

"Come, young feller," he said in his flat voice; "come on and give us a hand fillin' some o' them bags with seed-wheat, ready for the mornin'."

To repeat, it was not jealousy nor anything unutilitarian that had brought Duncan to the little prairie-stone structure where the two young people, among the milk-things, were drawing together by the lodge-signs of their freemasonry of youth. But a sudden inkling, an odd needle-point of new concern, a sensation unlike anything he had ever felt before, pricked the husband as he faced that flushed and sparkling glance which showed him for a moment a familiar little face grown queerly unfamiliar.

"I guess maybe you better hit the hay now," he said, half an hour later, as the last of the grain-bags was filled and set aside in a convenient corner for the morning seed-drill. "Yon's your bed." He pointed with one thick, blunt finger to a gray-blanketed cot in the corner of the granary—made up there because there was no accommodation in the partitionless farm-house up on the

knoll-top. He surveyed the young man steadily a moment; then, making no further remark, stepped lumberingly down from the granary door-jamb and made his way, forehead wrinkled and eyes on the ground, to the house.

Lottie had let down her hair and taken off her shoes, and was swaying softly in the wooden rocking-chair. Halting unperceived in the dusk outside the open door, Dave Duncan, stirred oddly, studied her as she sat in bright, half-smiling pensiveness, the lamplight on her comely, fresh-coloured young face and a little glint, as of soft summer starshine, in each of her eyes. Something had upset the torpid concernless balance of his healthy, middle-aged mental ease.

He felt a real pang as, stepping into view after his momentary pause outside, he saw all the light pass out of her face, leaving it dreary and casual.

"B'en a kend o' tough day on you, Lot, eh?" he ventured, awkwardly.

"Ye-es." She yawned indifferently in his face as she dropped into the monotone of Duncan & Duncan. "Finished seedin' yon forty-acre field yet, Dave?"

"Oh, I dun'no"—his usually dull face had taken on a queer glow—"I dun'no, Lot."

The something unusual in his deportment and in his clumsily ingratiating, half-diffident lingering on her name made Lottie Duncan glance up, faintly curious. After surveying him a moment, she arose, with a wholly unconscious and involuntary little shrug, and moved off toward the bed in the corner.

"I'm a kend o' tired, an' I want to get a good sleep," she said, over her shoulder. "Maybe you could split

me an armful or two o' wood now, before you get your shoes took off. See an' not wake me when you're comin' to bed, for I'm that drowsy-like. I'm goin' to need all the sleep I can get before sun-up."

"Aw, no, Lot. I— Gr-r-h'm"—he cleared raspingly the throat that had become husky with his attempt to lower his voice to coaxing-pitch—"I want t' talk a little to-night. You got plenty wood in the wood-box, there."

"A-all right, then," said Lottie, resignedly. She moved on another step or two, then turned slowly around and looked, not toward him as usual, but straight at him, at his reddening, commonplace face, at his granite eyes. "My, you're a queer man, Dave Duncan," she said, ponderingly; "too slow"—her voice quickened and took on a sudden tart flavour—"too slow to—to catch a cold."

Her husband stood a moment, his hat in his hand, after this last utterance. Then he said in his throat, low and humbly:

"I'll go an' split the full o' your wood-box, then, Lot, ef you—ef yur set on me doin' it."

He thrust his hat, fumblingly and awry, back on his head, and went out to the wood-pile.

If, through some perversity, Dave Duncan had decided to fasten irrevocably on himself the name for "slowness" it appeared he had acquired, he could not have taken longer than he did at the accepted task. Lottie, whom even the tangent excitation of this evening of her youth's reawakening could not draw away long from the regular orbit of her healthy mechanical day, heard from her pillow, as she yawned herself in pleasant

weariness toward slumber, the strong-swung ax dawdle intermittently in its chopping. There would come a dull, moody bump of steel on wood, a morose patter of falling chips, a rending of wood-fibres—then a long pause. Vaguely speculating as to the reason for this dalliance where she had expected haste, Lottie Duncan presently fell into her dreamless and restorative nightly sleep.

It might have been an hour later when she was awakened by the bang of a wood block striking a kettle on the edge of the stove as Dave Duncan emptied his burden into the fire-wood box between stove and wall. She was about to murmur impatiently at him, when something in his expression made her change her mind and pretend slumber while she watched him from under lids held so low that her eyes, back in that dusky corner, seemed closed.

He was travailing with an inward excitement. Even as she looked his way, this feeling, like a banked fire burning slowly to the surface, began to show in a kind of phosphorescence that made warm and translucent the opaque gray granite globules of his eyes. He was looking straight at her, with an unembarrassed intentness that showed her sleep-sham had deceived him.

There was nothing suggesting transiency nor shallowness in this regard he was giving her. It showed her a man—a man in the strong and potent prime of his matured middle years, thoroughly awakened, not one single healthy fibre quiescent, glowing with a late but new-found flame of love.

With woman's ready discernment of that thing which is what woman lives for, she could read that what possessed this man was, in spite of his years, a virgin

sensation. He had been dull merely because he had been undeveloped. It had only needed the spur of a rival near to bring him, her husband, to her in full fruition.

Her thought passed a moment to the boy Bert—his petted boy-blasé pose, his capers, his instant transparent susceptibility, his unrespecting boldness—all the things about him that represented the attitude of his type and age. When she had been an unattached maiden, with bright eyes and many callers, she had won notice without effort from a hundred of his like. She had seen boys and girls marry, and separate again, in mutual dislike and disgust, within a period of months.

But this—this capitulation of a man in the flesh-fortress of his settled, middle-aged maturity! It took practical, canny, experienced little Lottie Duncan only a moment to realize that her greatest triumph in love-winning had taken place in her own legitimate home.

She opened her eyes and, with a thrill, put out a hand.

"Dave!" she said.

He started; then came over to her, reduced at once to the red, fumbling humility of first love.

"Has it b'en a hard day on you, kend of?" were the plain words her lips framed—but her eyes looked the rest.

"It has, kend of, Lot," he mumbled. "I b'en thinkin', outside there, that maybe, after seedin's over, we ought to—ought to take a kend of a holiday—holiday, like, an'—an' freshen up."

THE GREAT ELECTION IN MISSINABA COUNTY

By STEPHEN LEACOCK

DON'T ask me what election it was, whether Dominion or Provincial or Imperial or Universal, for I scarcely know.

It must, of course, have been going on in other parts of the country as well, but I saw it all from Missinaba County which, with the Town of Mariposa, was, of course, the storm centre and focus point of the whole turmoil.

I only know that it was a huge election and that on it turned issues of the most tremendous importance, such as whether or not Mariposa should become part of the United States, and whether the flag that had waved over the school house at Tecumseh Township for ten centuries should be trampled under the hoof of an alien invader, and whether Britons should be slaves, and whether the farming class would prove themselves Canadians, and tremendous questions of that kind.

And there was such a roar and tumult to it, and such a waving of flags and beating of drums and flaring of torchlights that such parts of the election as may have been going on elsewhere than in Missinaba County must have been quite unimportant and didn't really matter.

Now that it is all over, we can look back at it without heat or passion. We can see,—it's plain enough now,—that in the great election Canada saved the British

Empire, and that Missinaba saved Canada and that the vote of the Third Concession of Tecumseh Township saved Missinaba County, and that those of us who carried the third concession,—well, there's no need to push it further. We prefer to be modest about it. If we still speak of it, it is only quietly and simply and not more than three or four times a day.

But you can't understand the election at all, and the conventions and the campaigns and the nominations and the balloting, unless you first appreciate the peculiar complexion of politics in Mariposa.

Let me begin at the beginning. Everybody in Mariposa is either a Liberal or a Conservative or else is both. Some of the people are or have been Liberals or Conservatives all their lives and are called dyed-in-the-wool Grits or old-time Tories and things of that sort. These people get from long training such a swift penetrating insight into national issues that they can decide the most complicated question in four seconds: in fact, just as soon as they grab the city papers out of the morning mail, they know the whole solution of any problem you can put to them. There are other people whose aim it is to be broad-minded and judicious and who vote Liberal or Conservative according to their judgment of the questions of the day. If their judgment of these questions tells them that there is something in it for them in voting Liberal, then they do so. But if not, they refuse to be the slaves of a party or the henchmen of any political leader. So that anybody looking for henches has got to keep away from them.

But the one thing that nobody is allowed to do in Mariposa is to have no politics. Of course there are

always some people whose circumstances compel them to say that they have no politics. But that is easily understood. Take the case of Trelawney, the postmaster. Long ago he was a letter-carrier under the old Mackenzie Government, and later he was a letter-sorter under the old Macdonald Government, and after that a letter-stamper under the old Tupper Government, and so on. Trelawney always says that he has no politics, but the truth is that he has too many.

So, too, with the clergy in Mariposa. They have no politics—absolutely none. Yet Dean Drone round election time always announces as his text such a verse as: "Lo! is there not one righteous man in Israel?" or: "What ho! is it not time for a change?" And that is a signal for all the Liberal business men to get up and leave their pews.

Similarly over at the Presbyterian Church, the minister says that his sacred calling will not allow him to take part in politics and that his sacred calling prevents him from breathing even a word of harshness against his fellow man, but that when it comes to the elevation of the ungodly into high places in the commonwealth (this means, of course, the nomination of the Conservative candidate) then he's not going to allow his sacred calling to prevent him from saying just what he thinks of it. And by that time, having pretty well cleared the church of Conservatives, he proceeds to show from the scriptures that the ancient Hebrews were Liberals to a man, except those who were drowned in the flood or who perished, more or less deservedly, in the desert.

There are, I say, some people who are allowed to claim to have no politics,—the office holders, and the

clergy and the school teachers and the hotel keepers. But beyond them, anybody in Mariposa who says that he has no politics is looked upon as crooked, and people wonder what it is that he is "out after".

In fact, the whole town and county is a hive of politics, and people who have only witnessed gatherings such as the House of Commons at Westminster and the Senate at Washington and never seen a Conservative Convention at Tecumseh Corners or a Liberal Rally at the Concession school house, don't know what politics means.

So you may imagine the excitement in Mariposa when it became known that King George had dissolved the parliament of Canada and had sent out a writ or command for Missinaba County to elect for him some other person than John Henry Bagshaw because he no longer had confidence in him.

The king, of course, is very well known, very favourably known, in Mariposa. Everybody remembers how he visited the town on his great tour in Canada, and stopped off at the Mariposa station. Although he was only a prince at the time, there was quite a big crowd down at the depot and everybody felt what a shame it was that the prince had no time to see more of Mariposa, because he would get such a false idea of it, seeing only the station and the lumber yards. Still, they all came to the station and all the Liberals and Conservatives mixed together perfectly freely and stood side by side without any distinction, so that the Prince should not observe any party differences among them. And he didn't,—you could see that he didn't. They read him an address all about the tranquillity and loyalty of the Empire, and they purposely left out any reference to the

trouble over the town wharf or the big row there had been about the location of the new post-office. There was a general decent feeling that it wouldn't be fair to disturb the prince with these things: later on, as the king, he would, of course, *have* to know all about them, but meanwhile it was better to leave him with the idea that his empire was tranquil.

So they deliberately couched the address in terms that were just as reassuring as possible and the prince was simply delighted with it. I am certain that he slept pretty soundly after hearing that address. Why, you could see it taking effect even on his aides-de-camp and the people round him, so imagine how the prince must have felt!

I think in Mariposa they understand kings perfectly. Every time that a king or a prince comes, they try to make him see the bright side of everything and let him think that they're all united. Judge Pepperleigh walked up and down arm in arm with Dr. Gallagher, the worst Grit in town, just to make the prince feel fine.

So when they got the news that the king had lost confidence in John Henry Bagshaw, the sitting member, they never questioned it a bit. Lost confidence? All right, they'd elect him another right away. They'd elect him half a dozen if he needed them. They don't mind; they'd elect the whole town man after man rather than have the king worried about it.

In any case, all the Conservatives had been wondering for years how the king and the governor-general and men like that had tolerated such a man as Bagshaw so long.

Missinaba County, I say, is a regular hive of politics, and not the miserable, crooked, money-ridden politics of the cities, but the straight, real old-fashioned thing that is an honour to the countryside. Any man who would offer to take a bribe or sell his convictions for money, would be an object of scorn. I don't say they wouldn't take money,—they would of course, why not? —but if they did they would take it in a straight fearless way and say nothing about it. They might,—it's only human,—accept a job or a contract from the government, but if they did, rest assured it would be in a broad national spirit and not for the sake of the work itself. No, sir. Not for a minute.

Any man who wants to get the votes of the Missinaba farmers and the Mariposa business men has got to persuade them that he's the right man. If he can do that,— if he can persuade any one of them he's the right man and that all the rest know it, then they'll vote for him.

The division, I repeat, between the Liberals and the Conservatives is intense. Yet you might live for a long while in the town between elections, and never know it. It is only when you get to understand the people that you begin to see that there is a cross division running through them that nothing can ever remove. You gradually become aware of fine subtle distinctions that miss your observation at first. Outwardly, they are all friendly enough. For instance, Joe Milligan the dentist is a Conservative, and has been for six years, and yet he shares the same boat-house with young Dr. Gallagher, who is a Liberal, and they even bought a motor boat between them. Pete Glover and Alf McNichol were in

partnership in the hardware and paint store, though they belonged on different sides.

But just as soon as elections drew near, the differences in politics became perfectly apparent. Liberals and Conservatives drew away from one another. Joe Milligan used the motor boat one Saturday and Dr. Gallagher the next, and Pete Glover sold hardware on one side of the store and Alf McNichol sold paint on the other. You soon realized too that one of the newspapers was Conservative and the other was Liberal, that there was a Liberal drug store and a Conservative drug store, and so on. Similarly round election time, the Mariposa House was the Liberal Hotel, and the Continental the Conservative, though Mr. Smith's place, where they always put on a couple of extra bar-tenders, was what you might call Independent-Liberal-Conservative, with a dash of Imperialism thrown in. Mr. Gingham, the undertaker, was, as a natural effect of his calling, an advanced Liberal, but at election time he always engaged a special assistant for embalming Conservative customers.

So now, I think, you understand something of the general political surroundings of the great election in Missinaba County.

John Henry Bagshaw was the sitting member, the Liberal member, for Missinaba County.

The Liberals called him the old war-horse, and the old battle-axe, and the old charger, and the old champion and all sorts of things of that kind. The Conservatives called him the old jackass and the old army mule and the old booze fighter and the old grafter and the old scoundrel.

John Henry Bagshaw was, I suppose, one of the greatest forces in the world. He had flowing white hair crowned with a fedora hat, and a smooth statesmanlike face which it cost the country twenty-five cents a day to shave.

Altogether the Dominion of Canada had spent over two thousand dollars in shaving that face during the twenty years that Bagshaw had represented Missinaba County. But the result had been well worth it.

Bagshaw wore a long political overcoat that it cost the country twenty cents a day to brush, and boots that cost the Dominion fifteen cents every morning to clean.

But it was money well spent.

Bagshaw of Mariposa was one of the most representative men of the age and it's no wonder that he had been returned for the county for five elections running, leaving the Conservatives nowhere. Just think how representative he was. He owned two hundred acres out on the Third Concession and kept two men working on it all the time to prove that he was a practical farmer. They sent in fat hogs to Missinaba County Agricultural Exposition and World's Fair every autumn, and Bagshaw himself stood beside the pig pens with the judges, and wore a pair of corduroy breeches and chewed a straw all afternoon. After that if any farmer thought that he was not properly represented in Parliament it showed that he was an ass.

Bagshaw owned a half share in the harness business and a quarter share in the tannery and that made him a business man. He paid for a pew in the Presbyterian Church and that represented religion in Parliament. He attended college for two sessions thirty years ago,

and that represented education and kept him abreast with modern science, if not ahead of it. He kept a little account in one bank and a big account in the other, so that he was a rich man and a poor man at the same time.

Add to that that John Henry Bagshaw was perhaps the finest orator in Mariposa. That, of course, is saying a great deal. There are speakers there, lots of them that can talk two or three hours at a stretch, but the old war-horse could beat them all. They say that when John Henry Bagshaw got well started, say after a couple of hours of talk, he could speak as Pericles or Demosthenes or Cicero never could have spoken.

You could tell Bagshaw a hundred yards off as a member of the House of Commons. He wore a pepper-and-salt suit to show that he came from a rural constituency, and he wore a broad gold watch-chain with dangling seals to show that he also represented a town. You could see from his quiet low collar and white tie that his electorate were a God-fearing, religious people, while the horse-shoe pin that he wore showed that his electorate were not without sporting instincts and knew a horse from a jackass.

Most of the time, John Henry Bagshaw had to be at Ottawa (though he preferred the quiet of his farm and always left it, as he said, with a sigh). If he was not in Ottawa, he was in Washington, and of course at any time they might need him in London, so that it was no wonder that he could only be in Mariposa about two months in the year.

That is why everybody knew, when Bagshaw got off the afternoon train one day early in the spring, that there

must be something very important coming and that the rumours about a new election must be perfectly true.

Everything that he did showed this. He gave the baggage man twenty-five cents to take the check off his trunk, the 'bus driver fifty cents to drive him up to the Main Street, and he went into Callahan's tobacco store and bought two ten-cent cigars and took them across the street and gave them to Mallory Tompkins of the *Times-Herald* as a present from the Prime Minister.

All that afternoon, Bagshaw went up and down the Main Street of Mariposa, and you could see, if you knew the signs of it, that there was politics in the air. He bought nails and putty and glass in the hardware store, and harness in the harness shop, and drugs in the drug store and toys in the toy shop, and all the things like that that are needed for a big campaign.

Then when he had done all this he went over with McGinnis, the Liberal organizer, and Mallory Tompkins, the *Times-Herald* man, and Gingham (the great Independent-Liberal undertaker) to the back parlour in the Mariposa House.

You could tell from the way John Henry Bagshaw closed the door before he sat down that he was in a pretty serious frame of mind.

"Gentlemen," he said, "the election is a certainty. We're going to have a big fight on our hands, and we've got to be ready for it."

"Is it going to be on the tariff?" asked Tompkins.

"Yes, gentlemen, I'm afraid it is. The whole thing is going to turn on the tariff question. I wish it were otherwise. I think it madness, but they're bent on it, and we got to fight it on that line. Why they can't

fight it merely on the question of graft," continued the old war-horse, rising from his seat and walking up and down, "Heaven only knows. I warned them. I appealed to them. I said, fight the thing on graft and we can win easy. Take this constituency,—why not have fought the whole thing out on whether I spent too much money on the town wharf or the post-office? What better issues could a man want? Let them claim that I am crooked, and let me claim that I'm not. Surely that was good enough without dragging in the tariff. But now, gentlemen, tell me about things in the constituency. Is there any talk yet of who is to run?"

Mallory Tompkins lighted up the second of the Prime Minister's cigars and then answered for the group:

"Everybody says that Edward Drone is going to run."

"Ah!" said the old war-horse, and there was joy upon his face, "is he? At last! That's good, that's good—now what platform will he run on?"

"Independent."

"Excellent," said Mr. Bagshaw. "Independent, that's fine. On a programme of what?"

"Just simple honesty and public morality."

"Come now," said the member, "that's splendid: that will help enormously. Honesty and public morality! The very thing! If Drone runs and makes a good showing, we win for a certainty. Tompkins, you must lose no time over this. Can't you manage to get some articles in the other papers hinting that at the last election we bribed all the voters in the county, and that we gave out enough contracts to simply pervert the whole constituency. Imply that we poured the public

money into this country in bucketsful and that we are bound to do it again. Let Drone have plenty of material of this sort and he'll draw off every honest unbiased vote in the Conservative party.

"My only fear is," continued the old war-horse, losing some of his animation, "that Drone won't run at all. He's said it so often before and never has. He hasn't got the money. But we must see to that. Gingham, you know his brother well; you must work it so that we pay Drone's deposit and his campaign expenses. But how like Drone it is to come out at this time."

It was indeed very like Edward Drone to attempt so misguided a thing as to come out an Independent candidate in Missinaba County on a platform of public honesty. It was just the sort of thing that anyone in Mariposa would expect from him.

Edward Drone was the Rural Dean's younger brother —young Mr. Drone, they used to call him years ago, to distinguish him from the rector. He was a somewhat weaker copy of his elder brother, with a simple, inefficient face and kind blue eyes. Edward Drone was, and always had been, a failure. In training he had been, once upon a time, an engineer and built dams that broke and bridges that fell down and wharves that floated away in the spring floods. He had been a manufacturer and failed, had been a contractor and failed, and now lived a meagre life as a sort of surveyor or land expert on goodness knows what.

In his political ideas Edward Drone was and, as everybody in Mariposa knew, always had been crazy. He used to come up to the autumn exercises at the high school and make speeches about the ancient Romans and

Titus Manlius and Quintus Curtius at the same time when John Henry Bagshaw used to make a speech about the Maple Leaf and ask for an extra half holiday. Drone used to tell the boys about the lessons to be learned from the lives of the truly great, and Bagshaw used to talk to them about the lessons learned from the lives of the extremely rich. Drone used to say that his heart filled whenever he thought of the splendid patriotism of the ancient Romans, and Bagshaw said that whenever he looked out over this wide Dominion his heart overflowed.

Even the youngest boy in school could tell that Drone was foolish. Not even the school teachers would have voted for him.

"What about the Conservatives?" asked Bagshaw presently; "is there any talk yet as to who they'll bring out?"

Gingham and Mallory Tompkins looked at one another. They were almost afraid to speak.

"Hadn't you heard?" said Gingham; "they've got their man already."

"Who is it?" said Bagshaw quickly.

"They're going to put up Josh Smith."

"Great Heaven!" said Bagshaw, jumping to his feet; "Smith! the hotel keeper?"

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Gingham, "that's the man."

Do you remember, in history, how Napoleon turned pale when he heard that the Duke of Wellington was to lead the allies in Belgium? Do you remember how when Themistocles heard that Aristogiton was to lead the Spartans, he jumped into the sea? Possibly you don't, but it may help you form some idea of what John Henry

Bagshaw felt when he heard that the Conservatives had selected Josh Smith, proprietor of Smith's Hotel.

You remember Smith. You've seen him there on the steps of his hotel,—two hundred and eighty pounds in his stockinged feet. You've seen him selling liquor after hours through sheer public spirit, and you recall how he saved the lives of hundreds of people on the day when the steamer sank, and how he saved the town from being destroyed the night when the Church of England church burnt down. You know that hotel of his, too, half way down the street, Smith's Northern Health Resort, though already they were beginning to call it Smith's British Arms.

So you can imagine that Bagshaw came as near to turning pale as a man in federal politics can.

"I never knew Smith was a Conservative," he said faintly; "he always subscribed to our fund."

"He is now," said Mr. Gingham ominously; "he says the idea of this reciprocity business cuts him to the heart."

"The infernal liar!" said Mr. Bagshaw.

There was silence for a few moments. Then Bagshaw spoke again.

"Will Smith have anything else in his platform besides the trade question?"

"Yes," said Mr. Gingham gloomily, "he will."

"What is it?"

"Temperance and total prohibition!"

John Henry Bagshaw sank back in his chair as if struck with a club. There let me leave him for a chapter.

THE CANDIDACY OF MR. SMITH

"Boys," said Mr. Smith to the two hostlers, stepping out on to the sidewalk in front of the hotel,—"hoist that there British Jack over the place and hoist her up good."

"Billy," he said to the desk clerk, "get a couple more and put them up on the roof of the caff behind the hotel. Wire down to the city and get a quotation on a hundred of them. Take them signs '*American Drinks*' out of the bar. Put up noo ones with '*British Beer at all Hours*'; clear out the rye whiskey and order in Scotch and Irish, and then go up to the printing office and get me them placards."

Then another thought struck Mr. Smith.

"Say, Billy," he said, "wire to the city for fifty pictures of King George. Get 'em good, and get 'em coloured. It don't matter what they cost.

"All right, sir," said Billy.

"And Billy," called Mr. Smith, as still another throught struck him (indeed, the moment Mr. Smith went into politics you could see these thoughts strike him like waves), "get fifty pictures of his father, old King Albert."

"All right, sir."

"And say, I tell you, while you're at it, get some of the old queen, Victorina, if you can. Get 'em in mourning, with a harp and one of them lions and a three-pointed prong."

. . . . . .

It was on the morning after the Conservative Convention. Josh Smith had been chosen the candidate. And now the whole town was covered with flags and

placards and there were bands in the streets every evening, and noise and music and excitement that went on from morning till night.

Election times are exciting enough even in the city. But there the excitement dies down in business hours. In Mariposa there aren't any business hours and the excitement goes on *all* the time.

Mr. Smith had carried the Convention before him. There had been a feeble attempt to put up Nivens. But everybody knew that he was a lawyer and a college man and wouldn't have a chance against a man with a broader outlook like Josh Smith.

So the result was that Smith was the candidate and there were placards out all over the town with SMITH AND BRITISH ALLEGIANCE in big letters, and people were wearing badges with Mr. Smith's face on one side and King George's on the other, and the fruit store next to the hotel had been cleaned out and turned into committee rooms with a gang of workers smoking cigars in it all day and half the night.

There were other placards, too, with BAGSHAW AND LIBERTY, BAGSHAW AND PROSPERITY, VOTE FOR THE OLD MISSINABA STANDARD BEARER, and up town beside the Mariposa House there were the Bagshaw committee rooms with a huge white streamer across the street, with a gang of Bagshaw workers smoking their heads off.

But Mr. Smith had an estimate made which showed that nearly two cigars to one were smoked in his committee rooms as compared with the Liberals. It was the first time in five elections that the Conservatives had been able to make such a showing as that.

One might mention, too, that there were Drone placards out,—five or six of them,—little things about the size of a pocket handkerchief, with a statement that "Mr. Edward Drone solicits the votes of the electors of Missinaba County." But you would never notice them. And when Drone tried to put up a streamer across the Main Street with DRONE AND HONESTY the wind carried it away into the lake.

The fight was really between Smith and Bagshaw, and everybody knew it from the start.

I wish that I were able to narrate all the phases and the turns of the great contest from the opening of the campaign till the final polling day. But it would take volumes.

First of all, of course, the trade question was hotly discussed in the two newspapers of Mariposa, and the *Newspacket* and the *Times-Herald* literally bristled with statistics. Then came interviews with the candidates and the expression of their convictions in regard to tariff questions.

"Mr. Smith," said the reporter of the Mariposa *Newspacket*, "we'd like to get your views of the effect of the proposed reduction of the differential duties."

"By gosh, Pete," said Mr. Smith," you can search me. Have a cigar."

"What do you think, Mr. Smith, would be the result of lowering the *ad valorem* British preference and admitting American goods at a reciprocal rate?"

"It's a corker, ain't it?" answered Mr. Smith. "What'll you take, lager or domestic?"

And in that short dialogue Mr. Smith showed that he had instantaneously grasped the whole method of

dealing with the press. The interview in the paper next day said that Mr. Smith, while unwilling to state positively that the principle of the tariff was at variance with sound fiscal science, was firmly of opinion that any reciprocal interchange of tariff preferences with the United States must inevitably lead to a serious per capita reduction of the national industry.

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"Mr. Smith," said the chairman of a delegation of the manufacturers of Mariposa, "what do you propose to do in regard to the tariff if you're elected?"

"Boys," answered Mr. Smith, "I'll put her up so darned high they won't never get her down again."

. . . . . .

"Mr. Smith," said the chairman of another delegation, "I'm an old free trader——"

"Put it there," said Mr. Smith, "so'm I. There ain't nothing like it.

. . . . . .

"What do you think of imperial defense?" asked another questioner.

"Which?" said Mr. Smith.

"Imperial defense."

"Of what?"

"Of everything."

"Who says it?" said Mr. Smith.

"Everybody is talking of it."

"What do the Conservative boys at Ottaway think about it?" answered Mr. Smith.

"They're all for it."

"Well, I'm fer it too," said Mr. Smith.

. . . . . .

These little conversations represented only the first stage, the argumentative stage of the great contest. It was during this period, for example, that the *Mariposa Newspacket* absolutely proved that the price of hogs in Mariposa was decimal six higher than the price of oranges in Southern California and that the average decennial import of eggs into Missinaba County had increased four decimal six eight two in the last fifteen years more than the import of lemons in New Orleans.

Figures of this kind made the people think. Most certainly.

After this came the organizing stage and after that the big public meetings and the rallies. Perhaps you have never seen a county being "organized". It is a wonderful sight. First of all the Bagshaw men drove through crosswise in top buggies and then drove through it lengthwise. Whenever they met a farmer they went in and ate a meal with him, and after the meal they took him out to the buggy and gave him a drink. After that the man's vote was absolutely solid until it was tampered with by feeding a Conservative.

In fact, the only way to show a farmer that you are in earnest is to go in and eat a meal with him. If you can't eat it, he won't vote for you. That is the recognized political test.

But, of course, just as soon as the Bagshaw men had begun to get the farming vote solidified, the Smith buggies came driving through in the other direction, eating meals and distributing cigars and turning all the farmers back into Conservatives.

Here and there you might see Edward Drone, the Independent Candidate, wandering round from farm to

farm in the dust of the political buggies. To each of the farmers he explained that he pledged himself to give no bribes, to spend no money and to offer no jobs, and each one of them gripped him warmly by the hand and showed him the way to the next farm.

After the organization of the county there came the period of the public meetings and the rallies and the joint debates between the candidates and their supporters.

I suppose there was no place in the whole Dominion where the whole trade question—the Reciprocity question—was threshed out quite so thoroughly and in quite such a national patriotic spirit as in Mariposa. For a month, at least, people talked of nothing else. A man would stop another in the street and tell him that he had read last night that the average price of an egg in New York was decimal nought one more than the price of an egg in Mariposa and the other man would stop the first one later in the day and tell him that the average price of a hog in Idaho was point six of a cent per pound less (or more,—he couldn't remember which for the moment) than the average price of beef in Mariposa.

People lived on figures of this sort, and the man who could remember most of them stood out as a born leader.

But of course it was at the public meetings that these things were most fully discussed. It would take volumes to do full justice to all the meetings that they held in Missinaba County. But here and there single speeches stood out as masterpieces of convincing oratory. Take, for example, the speech of John Henry Bagshaw at the Tecumseh Corners School House. The *Mariposa Times-Herald* the next day said that that speech would go down in history, and so it will,—ever so far down.

Anyone who has heard Bagshaw knows what an impressive speaker he is, and on this night when he spoke with the quiet dignity of a man old in years and anxious only to serve his country, he almost surpassed himself. Near the end of his speech somebody dropped a pin, and the noise it made falling fairly rattled the windows.

"I am an old man now, gentlemen," Bagshaw said, "and the time must soon come when I must not only leave politics, but must take my way towards that goal from which no traveller returns."

There was a deep hush when Bagshaw said this. It was understood to imply that he thought of going to the United States.

"Yes, gentlemen, I am an old man, and I wish, when my time comes to go, to depart leaving as little animosity behind me as possible. But before I *do* go, I want it pretty clearly understood that there are more darn scoundrels in the Conservative party than ought to be tolerated in any decent community. I bear," he continued, "malice towards none and I wish to speak with gentleness to all, but what I will say is that how any set of rational responsible men could nominate such a skunk as the Conservative candidate passes the bounds of my comprehension. Gentlemen, in the present campaign there is no room for vindictive abuse. Let us rise higher than that. They tell me that my opponent, Smith, is a common saloon keeper. Let it pass. They tell me that he is a notable perjurer, that he is known as the blackest-hearted liar in Missinaba County. Let us not speak of it. Let no whisper of it pass our lips.

"No, gentlemen," continued Bagshaw, pausing to take a drink of water, "let us rather consider this question on the high plane of national welfare. Let us not think of our own particular interests but let us consider the good of the country at large. And to do this, let me present to you some facts in regard to the price of barley in Tecumseh Township."

Then, amid a deep stillness, Bagshaw read off the list prices of sixteen kinds of grain in sixteen different places during sixteen years.

"But let me turn," Bagshaw went on to another phase of the national subject, "and view for a moment the price of marsh hay in Missinaba County—"

When Bagshaw sat down that night it was felt that a Liberal vote in Tecumseh Township was a foregone conclusion.

But here they hadn't reckoned on the political genius of Mr. Smith. When he heard next day of the meeting, he summoned some of his leading speakers to him and he said:

"Boys, they're beating us on them statissicks. Ourn ain't good enough."

Then he turned to Nivens and he said:

"What was them figures you had here the other night?"

Nivens took out a paper and began reading.

"Stop," said Mr. Smith, "what was that figure for bacon?"

"Fourteen million dollars," said Nivens.

"Not enough," said Mr. Smith, "make it twenty. They'll stand for it, them farmers."

Nivens changed it.

"And what was that for hay?"

"Two dollars a ton."

"Shove it up to four," said Mr. Smith. "And I tell you," he added, "if any of them farmers says the figures ain't correct, tell them to go to Washington and see for themselves; say that if any man wants the proof of your figures let him go over to England and ask,—tell him to go straight to London and see it all for himself in the books."

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After this, there was no more trouble over statistics. I must say though that it was a wonderfully convincing thing to hear trade figures of this kind properly handled. Perhaps the best man on this sort of thing in the campaign was Mullins, the banker. A man of his profession simply has to have figures of trade and population and money at his fingers' ends, and the effect of it in public speaking is wonderful.

No doubt you have listened to speakers of this kind, but I question whether you have ever heard anything more typical of the sort of effect that I allude to than Mullins's speech at the big rally at the Fourth Concession.

Mullins himself, of course, knows the figures so well that he never bothers to write them into notes and the effect is very striking.

"Now, gentlemen," he said very earnestly, "how many of you know just to what extent the exports of this country have increased in the last ten years? How many could tell what per cent. of increase there had been in one decade of our national importation?"—

then Mullins paused and looked around. Not a man knew it.

"I don't recall," he said, "exactly the precise amount myself,—not at this moment,—but it must be simply tremendous. Or take the question of population," Mullins went on, warming up again as a born statistician always does at the proximity of figures, "how many of you know, how many of you can state, what has been the decennial increase in our leading cities——?"

There he paused, and would you believe it, not a man could state it.

"I don't recall the exact figures," said Mullins, "but I have them at home and they are positively colossal."

But just in one phase of the public speaking, the candidacy of Mr. Smith received a serious set-back.

It had been arranged that Mr. Smith should run on a platform of total prohibition. But they soon found that it was a mistake. They had imported a special speaker from the city, a grave man with a white tie, who put his whole heart into the work and would take nothing for it except his expenses and a sum of money for each speech. But beyond the money, I say, he would take nothing.

He spoke one night at the Tecumseh Corners social hall at the same time when the Liberal meeting was going on at the Tecumseh Corners school house.

"Gentlemen," he said, as he paused half way in his speech,—"while we are gathered here in earnest discussion, do you know what is happening over at the meeting place of our opponents? Do you know that seventeen bottles of rye whiskey were sent out from town this afternoon to that innocent and unsuspecting

school house? Seventeen bottles of whiskey hidden in between the blackboard and the wall, and every single man that attends that meeting,—mark my words, every single man,—will drink his fill of the abominable stuff at the expense of the Liberal candidate."

Just as soon as the speaker said this, you could see the Smith men at the meeting look at one another in injured surprise, and before the speech was half over the hall was practically emptied.

After that the total prohibition plank was changed and the committee substituted a declaration in favour of such a form of restrictive license as should promote temperance while encouraging the manufacture of spirituous liquors, and by a severe regulation of the liquor traffic should place intoxicants only in the hands of those fitted to use them.

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Finally there came the great day itself, the Election Day that brought, as everybody knows, the crowning triumph of Mr. Smith's career. There is no need to speak of it at any length, because it has become a matter of history.

In any case, everybody who has ever seen Mariposa knows just what election day is like. The shops, of course, are, as a matter of custom, all closed, and the bar-rooms are all closed by law so that you have to go in by the back way. All the people are in their best clothes and at first they walk up and down the street in a solemn way just as they do on the twelfth of July and on St. Patrick's Day, before the fun begins. Everybody keeps looking in at the different polling places to see if anybody else has voted yet, because, of course,

nobody cares to vote first for fear of being fooled after all and voting on the wrong side.

Most of all did the supporters of Mr. Smith, acting under his instructions, hang back from the poll in the early hours. To Mr. Smith's mind voting was to be conducted on the same plan as bear-shooting.

"Hold back your votes, boys," he said, "and don't be too eager. Wait till when she begins to warm up and then let 'em have it good and hard."

In each of the polling places in Mariposa there is a returning officer and with him are two scrutineers, and the electors, I say, peep in and out like mice looking into a trap. But if once the scrutineers get a man well into the polling booth, they push him in behind a little curtain and make him vote. The voting, of course, is by secret ballot, so that no one except the scrutineers and the returning officer and the two or three people who may be round the poll can possibly tell how a man has voted.

That's how it comes about that the first results are often so contradictory and conflicting. Sometimes the poll is badly arranged and the scrutineers are unable to see properly just how the ballots are being marked and they count up the Liberals and the Conservatives in different ways. Often too, a voter makes his mark so hurriedly and carelessly that they have to pick it out of the ballot box and look at it to see what it is.

I suppose that may have been why it was that in Mariposa the results came out at first in such conflicting ways.

Perhaps that was how it was that the first reports showed that Edward Drone, the Independent candidate,

was certain to win. You should have seen how the excitement grew upon the streets when the news was circulated. In the big rallies and meetings of the Liberals and Conservatives, everybody had pretty well forgotten all about Drone, and when the news got round at four o'clock that the Drone vote was carrying the poll, the people were simply astounded. Not that they were not pleased. On the contrary. They were delighted. Everybody came up to Drone and shook hands and congratulated him and told him that they had known all along that what the country wanted was a straight, honest, non-partisan representation. The Conservatives said openly that they were sick of the party, utterly done with it, and the Liberals said they hated it. Already three or four of them had taken Drone aside and explained that what was needed in the town was a straight, clean, non-partisan post-office, built on a piece of ground of a strictly non-partisan character, and constructed under contracts that were not tainted and smirched with party affiliation. Two or three men were willing to show Drone just where a piece of ground of this character could be bought. They told him too that in the matter of the postmastership itself they had nothing against Trelawney, the present postmaster, in any personal sense, and would say nothing against him except merely that he was utterly and hopelessly unfit for his job and that if Drone believed, as he had said he did, in a purified civil service, he ought to begin by purifying Trelawney.

Already Edward Drone was beginning to feel something of what it meant to hold office, and there was

creeping into his manner the quiet self-importance which is the first sign of conscious power.

In fact, in that brief half-hour of office, Drone had a chance to see something of what it meant. Henry McGinnis came to him and asked straight out for a job as federal census-taker on the ground that he was hard up and had been crippled with rheumatism all winter. Nelson Williamson asked for the post of wharf-master on the plea that he had been laid up with sciatica all winter and was absolutely fit for nothing. Erasmus Archer asked him if he could get his boy Pete into one of the departments at Ottawa, and made a strong case of it by explaining that he had tried his cussedest to get Pete a job any where else and it was simply impossible. Not that Pete wasn't a willing boy, but he was slow,—even his father admitted it,—slow as the devil, blast him, and with no head for figures and unfortunately he'd never had the schooling to bring him on. But if Drone could get him at Ottawa, his father truly believed it would be the very place for him. Surely in the Indian Department or in the Astronomical Branch or in the new Canadian Navy there must be any amount of openings for a boy like this? And to all of these requests Drone found himself explaining that he would take the matter under his very earnest consideration and that they must remember that he had to consult his colleagues and not merely follow the dictates of his own wishes. In fact, if he ever in his life had any envy of Cabinet Ministers, he lost it in this hour.

But Drone's hour was short. Even before the poll had closed in Mariposa, the news came sweeping in, true or false, that Bagshaw was carrying the country. The

second concession had gone for Bagshaw in a regular landslide,—six votes to only two for Smith,—and all down the township line road (where the hay farms are) Bagshaw was said to be carrying all before him.

Just as soon as that news went round the town, they launched the Mariposa band of the Knights of Pythias (every man in it is a Liberal) down the Main Street with big red banners in front of it with the motto BAGSHAW FOREVER in letters a foot high. Such rejoicing and enthusiasm began to set in as you never saw. Everybody crowded round Bagshaw on the steps of the Mariposa House and shook his hand and said they were proud to see the day and that the Liberal party was the glory of the Dominion and that as for this idea of non-partisan politics the very thought of it made them sick. Right away in the committee rooms they began to organize the demonstration for the evening with lantern slides and speeches and they arranged for a huge bouquet to be presented to Bagshaw on the platform by four little girls (all Liberals) and all dressed in white.

And it was just at this juncture, with one hour of voting left, that Mr. Smith emerged from his committee rooms and turned his voters on the town, much as the Duke of Wellington sent the whole line to the charge at Waterloo. From every committee room and sub-committee room they poured in flocks with blue badges fluttering on their coats.

"Get at it, boys," said Mr. Smith, "vote and keep on voting till they make you quit."

Then he turned to his campaign assistant. "Billy," he said, "wire down to the city that I'm elected by an overwhelming majority and tell them to wire it back.

Send word by telephone to all the polling places in the county that the hull town has gone solid Conservative and tell them to send the same news back here. Get carpenters and tell them to run up a platform in front of the hotel; tell them to take the bar door clean off its hinges and be all ready the minute the poll quits."

It was that last hour that did it. Just as soon as the big posters went up in the windows of the *Mariposa Newspacket* with the telegraphic despatch that Josh Smith was reported in the city to be elected, and was followed by messages from all over the county, the voters hesitated no longer. They had waited, most of them, all through the day, not wanting to make any error in their vote, but when they saw the Smith men crowding into the polls and heard the news from the outside, they went solid in one great stampede, and by the time the poll was declared closed at five o'clock there was no shadow of doubt that the county was saved and that Josh Smith was elected for Missinaba.

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I wish you could have witnessed the scene in Mariposa that evening. It would have done your heart good,—such joy, such public rejoicing as you never saw. It turned out that there wasn't really a Liberal in the whole town and that there never had been. They were all Conservatives and had been for years and years. Men who had voted, with pain and sorrow in their hearts, for the Liberal party for twenty years, came out that evening and owned up straight that they were Conservatives. They said they could stand the strain no longer and simply had to confess. Whatever the sacrifice might mean, they were prepared to make it.

Even Mr. Golgotha Gingham, the undertaker, came out and admitted that in working for John Henry Bagshaw he'd been going straight against his conscience. He said that right from the first he had had his misgivings. He said it haunted him. Often at night when he would be working away quietly one of these sudden misgivings would overcome him so that he could hardly go on with his embalming. Why, it appeared that on the very first day when reciprocity was proposed, he had come home and said to Mrs. Gingham that he thought it simply meant selling out the country. And the strange thing was that ever so many others had had just the same misgivings. Trelawney admitted that he had said to Mrs. Trelawney that it was madness, and Jeff Thorpe, the barber, had, he admitted, gone home to his dinner, the first day reciprocity was talked of, and said to Mrs. Thorpe that it would simply kill business in the country and introduce a cheap, shoddy American form of haircut that would render true loyalty impossible. To think that Mrs. Gingham and Mrs. Trelawney and Mrs. Thorpe had known all this for six months and kept quiet about it! Yet I think there were a good many Mrs. Ginghams in the country. It is merely another proof that no woman is fit for politics.

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The demonstration that night in Mariposa will never be forgotten. The excitement in the streets, the torchlights, the music of the band of the Knights of Pythias (an organization which is conservative in all but name), and above all the speeches and the patriotism!

They had put up a big platform in front of the hotel, and on it were Mr. Smith and his chief workers and

behind them was a perfect forest of flags. They presented a huge bouquet of flowers to Mr. Smith, handed to him by four little girls in white,—the same four that I spoke of above, for it turned out that they were all Conservatives.

Then there were the speeches. Judge Pepperleigh spoke and said that there was no need to dwell on the victory that they had achieved, because it was history; there was no occasion to speak of what part he himself had played within the limits of his official position, because what he had done was henceforth a matter of history; and Nivens, the lawyer, said that he would only say just a few words, because anything that he might have done now was history; later generations, he said, might read it but it was not for him to speak of it, because it belonged now to the history of the country. And, after them, others spoke in the same strain and all refused absolutely to dwell on the subject (for more than half an hour) on the ground that anything that they might have done was better left for future generations to investigate. And no doubt this was very true, as to some things, anyway.

Mr. Smith, of course, said nothing. He didn't have to,—not for four years,—and he knew it.

THE ROOT HOUSE

By LESLIE McFARLANE

SMOKE hung about the little farm all morning, drifting down from the blaze in the slash. An acrid gray cloud hung over the whole land; it was bush fire season, and for many miles across the wide reaches of forest country and farm lands the billowing white columns towered to the autumn sky as though from the scattered camps of an invading army.

The slatternly, sharp-featured woman stood in the back doorway of the farmhouse, peering through the haze that almost obscured the dark wall of the evergreen bush. The slash fire had been burning for two days because the weather had been calm, but the wind had risen shortly after dawn and now vagrant flickers of flame licked their way through the veil of smoke.

The woman's face was hard with anxiety. Her eyes were red-rimmed and smarting. The smoke that had curled and drifted lazily about the farmhouse for two days was now driving down from the slash in heavy gusts and puffs. Sparks fluttered through the cloud. Light black flakes of charred bark settled softly down about the doorsteps.

Once in a while she could see the dark form of her husband through the shifting screen. His arms rose and fell fantastically. He was toiling at the outskirts of the

slash, the remnant of a bush already depleted of merchantable timber, trying to beat out flying sparks and embers that were constantly settling beyond the allotted boundaries of destruction.

It was a good farm, as Northern Ontario farms go, but they needed more land; hence the fire, which Joe Trent had started in the slash to raze the waste bush acres. It was out of season and he had no permit, but the weather had been so calm that there was no hint of danger. Now, with the rising wind, the flames were working their way around into the green bush.

The woman glanced at her little boy, who played with his dog in the yard. Then, as a sudden shower of sparks whirled by in the smoke, she called to the child, ordering him to come into the house. She seized a shovel that leaned beside the kitchen door, and trudged out across the yard, over the back fence, up to the borders of the slash.

Her husband was beating at the smouldering ground with a shovel wrapped in wet sacking. He turned a grubby, sweat-stained face toward her.

" 'Bout time you were lendin' a hand," he growled. "The wind's gettin' worse."

He was tired; his ragged overalls were smudged with grime; his moist face was streaked with dirt; his eyes were like narrow flecks of blood.

"Time you were askin' me to lend a hand," she snapped, bitterly. "Leave me down there wonderin' if you was never comin'. Like as not we'll all burn now."

Her voice was high-pitched and unnatural. She was unnerved, but her shrewishness had become a habit. She began to beat fiercely at the flames in the grass.

They laboured in the choking smoke, but the wind rose higher and the sky grew dark. The afternoon sun hung like a blood-smeared plate in the gloom. The hot blast of the advancing fire became unbearable, and they were beaten back before the blazing embers. The fire had entered the green bush, and the flames were mantling the tall trees, with a hollow roar.

The man and the woman flailed the creeping scarlet fingers of the flames in the silence of desperation, but the embers flew past them on the wings of the gale and the red rain of sparks danced in the smoke. The sharp snapping and crackling of blazing trees sounded above the deep rushing of the wind and the fire.

The slash acreage was a roaring fury and the green bush was swiftly becoming a flaring wall; the farmhouse was doomed; little tongues of flame licked their way along the wooden fences; a blazing ember settled in a pile of hay outside the stable; the hay flared up brightly.

They fought the fire until it became apparent that it was useless to fight longer; until the smoke and the heat became so intense that they had to turn and flee stumbling through the smoke toward the house.

"Tommy! Tommy!" shrieked the woman.

The dog barked. The child huddled in the doorway crying with fear. As she rushed up and clutched the boy in her arms and soothed him, the dog began to whimper and crawled grovelling at the foot of the steps. The man staggered up, swaying with exhaustion; his unshaven face was black with dirt, streaked with sweat, and his scant, wet hair was tousled.

"What'll we do? What'll we do?" the woman was moaning in a voice that quavered with terror. The

wind had risen to a hurricane; the fire was roaring down upon them in billows of black and crimson; their nearest neighbour was two miles away.

"Get to the root-house!" he shouted impatiently. "We can't save the place now. What're you waitin' for? Get to the root-house!"

His tones were so wearily contemptuous that he might have been addressing one of his own horses. They stumbled across the yard toward the root-house, a cave built into the hillside. The woman whimpered with fright, and the child, who lost the dog for a moment in the smoke, began to cry. The man cursed as he hurried after them. The farmhouse was obliterated by the dense smoke before they had gone five yards; their figures were dim and uncertain in the heavy cloud; he could see the burning fences through the murk and the high flames of the roaring bush. The wind shrieked; flaming embers drifting down like huge, red snow-flakes; the heat was terrific. It was almost impossible to breathe.

At the low entrance to the root-house he paused for a moment to look back at the farmhouse, at the barn and stable, at all that he had built in the past years now lying in the path of the flames. They were merely gloomy and uncertain shadows now. Even yet he could scarcely realize that bush fire, the monster that had haunted his dreams ever since he had come to the North, had at last overtaken them.

"Joe! Hurry up! We'll all be burnt. Hurry up, I tell you! Don't be so slow!"

The terrified tones of the woman, half-sobbing in the root-house, summoned him. He crouched and entered

by the narrow doorway. A foolish refuge, the root-house. But what else could they do? They could not wait in the house to be burned to death. They could not run away, for the whole countryside was now ablaze. His slash fire had but merged with the fire set out by another settler, and there were doubtless others down the road.

"All right. All right," he growled, as he lurched into the cavern. "Don't yell at me like that. There's no hurry. We're all here, ain't we?" He tried to close the door, but the woman had fallen in the way and he pushed her aside, impatiently. "Come on—get back or this place'll get full of smoke. How can I close the door, with you blubbering there in the road?"

The door thudded heavily. The root-house was plunged into darkness.

"It's black as hell in here!" he complained in exasperation. "Black as hell! Ain't you got a match or somethin'—a light? Have we got to die in the dark?"

He groped in the pockets of his torn overalls but there were no matches.

"Where are you anyway?" he demanded, testily. "Mary! Ain't you got any matches around here? Don't you ever have anything handy?"

"Give me time, will you?" she snapped back at him from the darkness. "I've got matches here, and part of a candle, too, if I can lay my hands on them. I've always kept 'em here in case somethin' like this would happen—"

She scratched the match clumsily on one of the beams, but the wood was soft and a phosphorescent streak was the only result at first. The child began to whimper.

He had been silent up to that time but now he was frightened by all the formidable accumulation of horrors that had ended in this impenetrable gloom.

"What's the matter, ma?" he asked, whining. "What's the matter? Why did we come in here? I want my dog. He'll get burnt up out in all that fire. Pa," he appealed, "Can I call my dog?" Hopefully, he began to call out, in shrill tones, "Here, Rover, Rover, Rover—"

A sudden, ill-tempered growl silenced him.

"Shut up, you young whelp," commanded the father. "Your dog's gone. It's burnt up. You'll never see the damned pup again, and good riddance, too. Lay off that racket, yelling for the brute." He subsided into an aggrieved muttering. "Everythin' burning up all around and you have to start howlin' for your miserable dog."

The child whimpered quietly, and the man directed his benevolent attentions toward the woman again. She was still vainly trying to light the candle. The root-house was joisted by heavy wooden beams, but the wood was soft and damp and the matches would not light.

"Hey!" he rasped, indignantly. "Haven't got that candle lit yet? I could have fifty of 'em lit in the time it takes you to strike a match. Don't be so damn slow. Give us a light, for God's sake. It's dark in here." He said it as though she were somehow personally to blame for the circumstance of darkness. "Here! Lemme have them matches—"

"Oh, keep quiet," she snapped. "I'm doin' this." As she spoke, a match flared and she applied it to the

candle, which flickered weakly and cast gigantic shadows on the earthy walls of the cave.

The woman sank back dispiritedly, against a sack of potatoes. "There! Now start jawin' at me because we ain't got electric lights in here."

"Well, the candle's better than nothin'," the man conceded. He was squatting on the mouldy floor, and the shadows and the small proportions of the cave tended to exaggerate his size until he gave an impression of ominous, lowering bulk.

"It's lucky we got a root-house to come to," he rumbled. "We'd have been burnt to a cinder by now, the way them flames was comin' down." He wagged his heavy head, reminiscently. "God, but that fire come on us quick! I never seen anything like it. It was the wind. The damned wind! If it hadn't turned, we'd have been all right. But it got worse and worse, and then swept her right down from the bush before I knew what was happenin'. It's always the way. The cursed wind had to go and turn on us and down she come a-whoopin'."

His wife, huddled against the wall of the cave, in the shadow of one of the beams, drew the child closer to her. The woman's thin face was hidden but her features could not have expressed the hatred that vibrated in her tones, the tense hatred that one can only feel for those with whom one has been in daily, intimate, monotonously wretched contact for long years.

"Yes," she shrilled. "If you hadn't set out that fire in the slash it wouldn't never have happened. That's what started it. You and your slash fire! And everything so dry. There ain't been a drop of rain in weeks

and yet you'd have to go and start a fire in the slash. And now look! Our whole farm's burnt and all our work's gone for nothin'. All our work—"

The shrillness died from her tones as she considered this, and her voice became suddenly old and despondent, wearily reflective. "All our work. And we worked so hard. All these years. All through you, just because you had to go and start that fool fire in the slash." The full realization of the disaster that had befallen them was just beginning to dawn, and her bitterness increased again. "The wind turned! It's just like you to blame it on the wind! What harm would the wind have done if your slash fire hadn't been burnin' there in the first place? And now everythin's gone."

"Aw shut up," he replied heavily. He was uneasily conscious that she was right, that there had indeed been folly in setting out a fire in such dry weather, but this could not, of course, be admitted. "How was I to know the wind would come up? There hasn't been a high wind in weeks. A man's got to burn slash."

They huddled in their gloomy little hole in the ground and wrangled, while outside the fire raged across their farm and across the farms of their neighbours. Fields were being blackened, trees were tumbling to the earth in flurries of flame and smoke and dust, all the country was wrapped in an impenetrable haze. They might have been in a separate world; they crouched in this narrow cave, apart from the ruin above and without. An acrid odour was the only reminder of the fire, for smoke was seeping gradually through crannies in the heavy door. They wrangled on.

"The fire ranger told you not to set out the fire. But,

no, you would not listen to him. You know it all. You won't listen to nobody, you won't, and then you go ahead and burn the whole place up and mebbe burn us all to death yet for all we know—and blame it on the wind."

"Listen! Listen to that talk!" he jeered. "Who wanted me to burn the slash in the first place? Who did? You! It was you! Always at me to get more land cleared! Never satisfied with gettin' on with what we had. Always at me to clear more land so's we'd make more money. Whose fault was it if I burnt that slash too soon? Yours! And well you know it! I'd never have burnt it at all if it hadn't been for you."

"No. You'd have been too lazy. But it's burnt now and we're goin' to die in here and you're to blame. We're goin' to die here. I know it. The smoke's gettin' worse and if we open the door it'll smother us. The flames will come in."

The man glanced about him uneasily and sniffed. It was a fact, the smoke was getting worse. In the candle light, indeed, he could see the wreathing gray curls. This was alarming. It would be a long time before they could risk opening the door. Unless the wind changed, the smoke would lie heavily near the ground for hours after the fire passed. And the root-house was stuffy as it was. The limited supply of air would be exhausted soon enough without the added danger of suffocation from incoming smoke.

The child became restless and whimpered again. "My dog'll be all burnt up, ma. Open the door till I get my dog."

It was a relief to the man to have some excuse for anger. He turned to the boy. "Shut up, you! Keep quiet about that dog," he snapped. "We've got enough to worry about. Keep quiet now, or I'll give you a thrashing."

The woman rocked to and fro in despair, moaning to herself. "I wisht I'd never come to this north country with you at all. If it ain't one thing it's another. Cold and snow all winter long, and bush fires the rest of the year. And all the time, puttin' up with a lazy, shiftless lout like you. I wisht I'd never come. It's no country for a woman anyway."

"Snivellin' again," he rasped. "I wisht you'd never come neither," he told her heartily. "A hell of a lot of help you've been to me up here. A hell of a lot! You've done nothin' but nag at me, day and night ever since we come."

He gazed moodily at the earthen wall.

"I've worked like a dog tryin' to satisfy your whims, and still you're never satisfied. You didn't like the log house we had at first so I scraped and worked till I built you a better one. And then nothin' would do but we had to have another horse, more cattle, then more land. Always at me! Never leavin' me alone. Jaw, jaw, jaw, jaw, day in and day out. That temper of yours would drive a man crazy. Always chewin' the rag about somethin'. And me workin' like a fool for you."

She thrust her head forward from the shadows, her thin face distorted with resentment and fury.

"And ain't I worked?" she screamed. "Ain't I? Ain't I worked like a slave to keep us all livin'?" She stumbled over the words in the eagerness of her own

pathetic defence. His injustice had been like a whip. "Washin' clothes and scrubbin' and ironin' and mendin' and makin' bread—even workin' in the fields with you! Never gettin' out to town but onct or twict a year! Buried back in this place. You don't think of that, do you? No, you're a man. You never think of that. I've been out on this farm for sixteen years, sixteen long, miserable years. And look what they've made of me!"

"Yeh—look!"

"D'you wonder I ain't sweet-tempered? Never once have I got out to see my people down south since I was married. Never once. It cost too much. Too far away. Did you hear me complainin'? No. I've worked myself half to death, just so's we could get ahead. You'd never get anywhere if I didn't keep at you. You're so shiftless we wouldn't have been any farther ahead than the day we first came here, if I hadn't made you keep workin'. And this is what I get for it. To die in a hole in the ground—like an animal, and have you say I ain't been no help to you and you wisht I'd never come north!"

His words had cut deeply. She laughed. It was hysteric. "And die in a hole in the ground, like an animal," she repeated. "But it's fittin'. It's fittin' all right, for I've had to live like an animal up here and I might as well die like one—and you say I ain't been no help to you!"

Sobs, deep and bitter, shook her thin body. The man, somewhat shamefaced, looked at the ground. The child clung closer to his mother, trying to soothe her. "Ma, what're you cryin' about!" he asked. "Don't cry." Then, as she clutched him convulsively

by the sleeve he began to plead. "Ma, will you open the door and let me get my dog? He's locked out there. I think I hear him scratchin'. Listen ma, I think I hear him scratchin' at the door."

The man mopped his face with a red handkerchief. "God, it's gettin' hot in here," he said hoarsely. "Smoky too."

The woman said nothing. Words would have reassured him. Her silence made him nervous.

"Ma, I'm hot. I can't get my breath," complained the boy.

"You're just right, it's hot," the man agreed, this time, surprisingly enough, failing to become angered by the interruption. "And that smoke! That rotten smoke! It's seepin' in everywhere. It's gettin' worse every minute. Gettin' worse." He became alarmed, a little panic-stricken. "By cripes, we'll be smothered in here yet if we don't do somethin'. It's the door."

He crawled over to the entrance and examined the door in the gloom, running his nervous fingers over the thick boards. It's seepin' in here somewhere. Around the sides. Say, gimme somethin' to put around it. There's cracks where the smoke's comin' in."

"There's nothing here," she said dully.

"No old sacks? No old clothes or nothin'?"

The woman glanced about, dispiritedly, for a moment, "Not that I can find."

"This is a fine mess," he grumbled, in frightened disgust. "Smoke just pourin' in here. Why didn't you see that there were sacks and things like that around? You're always bragging about being so careful. What's the use of havin' a root-house if the smoke's going to

pour in and smother us all? Just when we need an old sack or an old coat or somethin' to put around the door, there's nothing here."

"Oh, yes. It's my fault. It's always my fault." The injustice of his complaint stung her frayed nerves. "Why didn't you look after it yourself?" With a quick movement she began to tear at her worn waist. "Here, then—this'll have to do."

Hastily she stripped it off and flung it over to him, then crouched beside the candle again, the feeble light shining on her bare arms and shoulders. He looked at the waist, dubiously.

"Well, it ain't much, but it's better than nothin'." He stuffed the cloth about the chinks of the door, and moved back a little to survey the result. "It helps," he announced, grudgingly. "But the smoke's still comin' in."

The woman coughed. It sent a faint thrill of terror through them. She became desperately frightened.

"We'll all be smothered here. I know it. I know we'll never get out alive. We're goin' to die," she quavered in a rush of words. Another cough racked her body. "Oh, why did you ever set that fire in the slash? It's so hot and smoky here I can't breathe. If you hadn't set that fire—"

"For God's sake, keep quiet about that fire in the slash," he roared. "Let up on it, will you? It's done, ain't it, and it can't be helped now. Quit grouchin' at me about it. All we've got to do now is wait for the fire to go over."

This made him reflect. "It should be pretty near over by now, at that," he muttered. "Seems like we've been in this here furnace for hours."

The maddening feature of the situation was that although they were slowly smothering to death within the root-house, gradually exhausting the limited supply of air, it was quite possible that the fire had passed over, that the wind had changed and driven off the smoke outside. Whether the wind changed or not, there was bound to be a certain amount of smoke lingering close to the ground and this would seep into the root-house for hours, although it might be quite safe for them to go outside. They could not last much longer in that stuffy cavern, he knew. The air was becoming foul. But they could not risk leaving the place until the last moment, because the wind might not have changed after all, the fire might not have passed over, and if they opened the door they might be engulfed in billows of smoke and sheets of flame in which they would perish swiftly.

"The air's gettin' bad," he said, as though hoping for contradiction.

The candle guttered. Smoke could be very plainly seen, wreathing about in the yellow light. The woman was seized by another paroxysm of coughing.

"What're you coughing about?" he demanded, fiercely. "Don't start your chokin' and gaspin' now. We've got a damn long time to wait yet, so you may as well make up your mind to get used to it."

"It's the smoke," she gasped. "I can't help it if I cough. I can't stand this much longer. The smoke's worse."

"Aw, it ain't so bad," he replied, in a kindlier tone. Then, he, too, was forced to cough. "Damn the smoke,"

he muttered, wiping his eyes. "It is gettin' worse."

"Don't you think we can open the door now?" she choked. "Mebbe it's passed over—"

"Open the door? Take a chance like that? You're crazy! We'd be burnt to a cinder. Or smothered in a second. No, we got to stay here. We can't risk it. Mebbe everythin's all right and mebbe it ain't." He coughed again and began to stuff the cloth more securely into the crannies at the side of the door.

"We'll die here. I know it." Her voice rose, tremulous, terrified. "Dear God, we'll die here! We'll smother! I can't get my breath."

"Don't get in a panic," he ordered, gruffly. "Mebbe it'll clear up."

The child began to cough and would have complained, but his mother, fearful of her husband's anger, silenced him sibilantly.

"That smoke's awful," muttered the man, after a long period of quiet. "It's into my eyes and my throat. A man can't breathe, hardly. And it ain't gettin' any better." There was no reply, and he went on, thoughtfully. "Mebbe we *will* smother in here." The silence unnerved him. "Why don't you say somethin'?" he demanded. She did not reply. The candle was fluttering, almost out, and he peered anxiously through the darkening haze. "Mary! Are you all right?"

Her voice came, weakly. "I'm all right, Joe. But the smoke! It's smotherin' me—"

He sank back relieved. "You gave me a scare. I thought you was gone under."

"I'll be gone under soon enough," she whispered,

with difficulty. "The smoke's so thick. A body can't live much longer in here."

She coughed again and again. She no longer crouched against the wall, but lay quivering and exhausted on the earthen floor.

"It is bad, and that's a fact," he admitted, conscious of a constriction in his chest. "Worse'n I thought it'd be. God! Supposin' we should all be smothered in here." The idea of death as applied to himself seemed to strike him for the first time. He became suddenly solicitous. "Tommy?" he said, anxiously. "How're you comin' along, kiddo? Are you all right?"

"I want to go out, Papa," said the child. It's too dark and hot and smoky in here. I can't breathe. I want my dog."

"You can't go out, Tommy—not just yet," he answered, mildly. The man paused for a while, then went on, as though talking to himself. "This'd be a rotten way to die. A rotten way! Don't dare open that door . . . if the fire ain't gone we'd be finished . . . and it can't be gone yet . . . wind might have changed . . . can't risk it . . . " He looked about the dim cavern with the futile restlessness of an animal in a cage. "Simply stiflin' in here . . . hard to breathe . chokin'!"

Sweat streamed down his face. His smarting eyes were fixed on the inscrutable door. "What's a man to do?" he muttered. "Nothin' but wait. Who'd ever think we'd die like this—us!" A mouthful of smoke gagged him. His head was swimming. He crawled on hands and knees over to the doorway again and crouched

there on all fours, staring at the heavy barrier as though seeking the answer to its riddle. "Smoke! Agh! We will die! We will die! It ain't right. We can't." He coughed, wretchedly. "This rotten smoke! Worse and worse—"

"I don't want to die, Joe. I don't want to die," gasped the woman.

"Who's talkin' of dyin'?" he asked, thickly, turning around as though only then conscious of her presence. Then, in gentler tones: "Don't be scared, Mary. The smoke'll be clearin' up soon."

Sympathy born of an immense pity for himself had stirred in his heart, sympathy for the frail form lying in the candle light.

"It won't clear up. I know," she gasped, pitifully. "I'm not scared. I'm not scared of dyin', Joe, but I'm not ready to die. I don't want to. I'm not ready."

Hope had left her.

"None of us ever is ready," he answered, his words blurred. "How's the kid?"

Her voice was deep with a sorrowful consternation as she looked down at the little boy clutched to her breast. "He's chokin'. He's gaspin' for breath, Joe. We can't live in here, Joe! We're not goin' to really die, are we? Tell me, Joe, d'you think we'll die?" Her voice rose, pleading for some note of hope.

"No, no," he gasped. "It'll clear up. It'll clear up." He repeated the assurance doggedly, although he could hardly speak, for bitter smoke was in his throat and every breath tortured him.

He could distinguish her harassed face raised appealingly toward him in the murky gloom. "I'm not ready,"

she sobbed. "Not ready. I ain't never been to a church in weeks. If I die, I won't go to heaven. I know I won't."

Clumsily, he tried to reassure her. "Yes, you will, Mary. You'll go to heaven all right. Don't be worryin.' You're not goin' to die. The smoke'll clear up. You'll go to heaven."

"No," she insisted, despairingly. "I'm not ready. Wasn't at church in weeks—"

"What does goin' to church have to do with it?"

She seized eagerly at this straw. "You know I couldn't go very often, Joe. There was so much work, 'n everything; so much work. On Sundays I was always so tired." She paused and seemed to contemplate in the instant all the long procession of dreary Sundays that marched like shadows across the years; then she returned swiftly to her former mood. "No, I'm not ready. Oh, Joe, I can't die now. I'm not ready. I haven't been good. I haven't been good to you—"

"Aw, don't talk like that," he said, awkwardly. Then the smoke got in his throat; he gagged and coughed. "The smoke!" he gasped. "God! It's thick. We'll—be—all—right—"

Words tumbled from her, hasty, frightened words of repentance:

"I've been mean and cross with you, Joe. I've nagged at you all the time. I don't want to die havin' you think of me as bein' mean to you. You said I was. A while ago. You said I was always naggin' at you. It's true—it's true—but Joe—"

"I didn't mean that, Mary," he told her. "Honest, I didn't mean it. You never nagged at me—"

"I did. I did," she interrupted, mournfully. She seemed quite resigned now. "Joe, don't think I'm scared—but before we go, I want you to know I was never mean and cross to you a'purpose. It was just that I never thought."

Her pitiful apologies rendered him uncomfortable.

"Never mind that, Mary. I don't hold nothin' against you. I wasn't as sweet with you as I should 'a'been, myself."

"I've been a hindrance to you," the woman went on, in her passionate monotone. "You said so. I was to blame for you burnin' the slash. I know I was. I kept naggin' at you till you set that fire. I know I was to blame. But you know I didn't mean to be naggin' at you all the time. It was just so's we'd get along. Tryin' to get the work done. I wasn't really a hindrance to you, was I, Joe—all those years?—"

The pleading voice aroused a deep remorse in him. "No, oh, no, I never meant that, Mary. You've been a help. I couldn't 'a' got along without you. Oh, God, no, you ain't been a hindrance. Forget that I ever said it, Mary. I never meant it. It's me that should be sorry—"

"I always cared for you—"

"I know." He coughed. "The smoke's worse. Beginnin' to look bad, old girl. Afraid?"

She was gasping, hoarsely.

"No, I'm not afraid. We can't last much longer. Oh, it's horrible. Horrible. Dyin' like this—" She began to sob hysterically, but at last she became calmer and lay on the ground taking deep, hollow breaths that sent her into another fit of coughing. At last she raised

her head, weakly, and gazed at him with steady, terrified eyes through the gloom. "I'm not afraid. So long's you're not angry—"

"Angry! It's you that has the call to be angry. The way I've treated you, and the kid here. Hardly ever a civil word to you. Blamin' you for everythin' that went wrong—"

"I wisht we wasn't goin' to die," she said, sadly. "I wisht we could start all over again. I'd be good to you, Joe. I swear I'd be good to you. Oh, God, don't let us die." She prayed fervently, raising her eyes to the rough beams above. "Please don't let us die in here. God! In the dark, like this. I deserve it, I know, God, but I'm not ready. Give me another chanst—"

"I wisht it'd come quick and get it over with," he interrupted, gruffly. "I got a good mind to open that door. If we gotta die, we'd die quick. There wouldn't be the waitin'."

The child, who was huddled in a corner, gave a muffled gasp.

"I guess we're goin'," whispered the man. "My lungs is full of smoke. The air's bad. My head's swimmin'."

"Joe—I'm sorry—"

"Never mind, Mary. I don't hold no grudges. You was always a good wife to me. Better'n I deserved. I'm sorry I made things so miserable for you. But I never thought. I never thought—"

"It was me. It was me was to blame," she insisted. "Always findin' fault with you. Never givin' you credit for what you did. But it was the work, Joe. The hard

work. And livin' away back here. Nobody to talk to. Always the same, day in and day out."

Some appreciation of what she had endured, struck him then for the first time. "I know," he muttered. "It's been hard for you. I made it all the harder—"

"I'm goin', Joe. The smoke's too much—" She coughed, violently. "I'm smotherin' to death." Panic swept over her. "Tommy—Tommy—" The woman clutched the child to her, frantically. "Joe—he don't answer me—Tommy!"

The child opened his eyes weakly.

"Ma. Take me out." The voice was very drowsy.

"He's dyin'. Joe, he's dyin'," she gasped. "The poor little chap's smotherin' to death in my arms. What'll we do?"

"I'm goin' to open the door," came the grim voice of the man. "May as well come now as later."

The words fell with the terrific solemnity of phrases in a death warrant.

"Not yet," she appealed, hurriedly. "Not yet, Joe. I want to pray. Just in case—just for a minute—" She began to mumble indistinguishable words.

"Pray for me, too," he said, awkwardly, after a moment. "There's a chance—just a chance for us, yet—but, oh, yes—pray—"

After a while he asked her:

"Ready?"

"Open it, Joe. Open the door," she said, quietly. "Joe—all the mean things I've said—don't hold 'em against me—"

"I ain't been good to you, Mary. I'm sorry. But I cared a lot for you. More'n I realized." He groped

his way toward her through the void, and she huddled into his arms. He felt her tear-stained face, and kissed her. In that fleeting second there came to them the memory of another kiss, in a green lane full of shadows on a damp spring evening years ago, so long back that the memory hardly seemed theirs now at all but a memory of people other than themselves.

"Good-bye, Mary," he muttered. Then he kissed the child. "Good-bye, Tommy. Just in case—" His mind obstinately clung to the fact that they had a slender chance for life.

"Good-bye," said the woman, very tenderly. "Oh, Tommy—my poor little boy—" She kissed the child passionately again and again.

The man crawled over to the door.

He tugged at the fastening. It gave, suddenly, and the door fell open.

A rectangle of smoky, gray light sprang out of the darkness, and a cloud of smoke rolled through the doorway. The man fell back before it, choking, and then he recovered himself; this was only the ground smoke; the wind, he could tell, had changed and the fire had passed over; they had a chance. He dragged the woman to the doorway, out into the air, through the smoke that was pouring into the root-house, and she clung to the half-conscious child.

The fire had passed over. Smoke still lay close to the ground, but it had thinned out, and when one stood upright it was easy enough to breathe. They clung together, gasping, breathing the purer air.

Death was not for them after all.

After a while they had revived sufficiently to look about them. All the land was gray. The farmhouse was gone; the barn and stable were gone. A haze of smoke hung over everything, down over the flat waste that once had been the slash over the back pasture, far over to where the green bush once had stood. Flames still rose from the charred black ruins of the forest.

"It's gone," said the man at last. "Fire's passed over. God! It's passed over. The smoke ain't so much. We can breathe—"

The woman was gazing out at the hole in the ground, now filled with ashes and debris, that had once been the cellar of their home.

"It's gone. The house is gone."

"A clean sweep," he said, dully, beginning to comprehend the loss. "Even the fences went. Look at 'em smoulderin'."

"All our work. Gone for nothin'." She began to cry, silently. "It's cruel. It's cruel. Nothin' left—all from that awful fire—" Tears streamed down her thin cheeks.

They could not believe that all their toil had come to this ignoble end—a smoky waste, a grave of ashes.

"It ain't right," he said, wildly. "A man works his heart out. And it all goes in a flash. Like this. It ain't right."

He paused, as though awaiting some answer from the destiny that had contrived this injustice. But the whole land was in silence. The roaring terror had passed on and only the dull smoke rose sullenly from the feebly flaming ruins.

"The house all gone. And my garden—"

"All my crops," he muttered.

"Nothin' left. After sixteen years."

"Got to start all over."

They thought of the long, dull years that had passed and of the long, dull years that loomed ahead, years of struggling painfully again for nothing more than what they had already struggled painfully to earn. It was bitter.

"All the workin' and scrapin' and savin'. All over again." In spite of herself, the reproach was wrung from her. "Oh, if you hadn't started that fire in the slash!"

He turned on her, as by old habit.

"There! Blame me! I knew it! You told me to start the fire. And now look. Not a roof over our heads. Nothin' but the clothes we've got on us. After the way I've worked. Don't be blamin' me. You told me to start the fire. You was always at me."

She was stung to defend herself.

"As if I'm to blame! You lit the fire. You knew the slash was dry. You can't get over that. Burnt us out of house and home."

The habits of sixteen years again controlled them. He was as arrogant, as overbearing as he had always been; she was as bitter, as shrewish as before.

"You'd think I'd done it on purpose, to hear you talk!" he snarled. "If you'd kept your mouth shut I'd never have started that fire. But no, you was always at me. Always yappin' about clearin' more land. Clear away the slash, you told me. Well, it's cleared now. You're satisfied, I hope. Nothin' left but stumps and

ashes. You'll keep quiet about clearin' more land after this."

They trudged slowly over the ash-strewn ground, still warm under their feet, toward the ruins of their home, their harsh voices raised in incessant dispute. The little boy, now recovered from the smoke, trudged wondering at their heels.

"Blame me! Blame me!" she shrilled. "That's right! Blame me! Start a fire in the dry season and blame me because it burns up everythin' we've got in the world—"

"Aw, quit your damned jawing!"

The child wandered off across the yard, calling weakly, hopefully; "Here, Rover—Rover—Rover . . ."

SUSIE AND PERCE

By THOMAS MURTHA

SUSIE went across the five-foot square hall into the front room of the attic flat, and lit the gas under the kettle. The gas-plate stood upon a cupboard alongside a neat stack of tin-ware. The tube carrying the gas was arched up the wall to a socket. Susie had tacked a square of white oil-cloth on the papered wall behind the plate to save the wall from getting splashed with grease.

She laid two places on the table, and cut bread, and got a ketchup bottle from the cupboard under the gas-plate. The bottle was three-quarters empty. She said, "I must get another bottle. It's good. Perce likes it."

Susie was twenty. She was slight of body, and had fair hair, that was bobbed and hung very straight. It had not been cut for some time and was getting long again. Susie's nose was not too long, nor did her chin recede, like Percy's. She had no buck-teeth like he had. Her eyes were faded, they were that light in colour. She was wearing a thin over-all white apron, that left her neck showing, so that one could see the outlines of the bones there.

She pulled a rocker over to the wall-register by the gas-plate and sat there, under the light, waiting for the kettle to boil and for Perce to come. He got home usually at half-past five. He quit calling at houses at

five. He said people didn't want to be bothered by being asked to see sewing-baskets after that hour. It wouldn't be doing justice to the work.

Perce knew a thing or two, all right. Lots of canvassers would keep on calling at doors through the supper-hour. Perce was a good salesman and knew better. There hadn't been a day for the past three weeks when he had been working for the Victoria House-Utensil Company but when he had sold over twelve sewing-baskets. And he got twenty-five cents on every basket. He was doing all right. If he hadn't been let go at the restaurant he would be getting still a lousy fifteen a week. A good thing it was that the old boss had had a nephew wanting to get into the business. Else Percy would still be there. And they would be living in that single room on Bleeker Street, doing all eating and sleeping in that one room, on the same floor as Mr. Reid, the whiskered old bill-collector who came home drunk.

Susie jumped up and stood by the stove with a dish-cloth in her hands when she heard Percy coming. She knew his step on the stair. He coughed on the last flight as usual, to let her know it was he.

The customary mumbled greeting passed and he went into the bedroom to take off his coat and cap. Susie heard him fumbling with the light, the clatter as he threw down his sample basket, and the rustling of his clothes. He had a paper too, she could hear it. He came back to the kitchen, blowing his nose, and with the paper tucked under one arm. Susie yawned. She said, trying to be nice, "Well, how did you do to-day?"

"Fourteen," he said simply, stuffing the handkerchief in his hip-pocket and shaking out the paper.

Susie emptied a bowl of potatoes in the frying-pan, and cut three sausages in small pieces through the potatoes. They both liked fried potatoes. Susie had saved these from the day before. They would go good with the ketchup.

"Any news?" she asked.

"Oh, nothing much. Getting cold out. I think it will snow."

"Huh?"

"I say it's getting cold. I think it will snow."

"That so? Say, wasn't it snowing heavy last night when Bill and Ethel were leaving here?" Susie had a whisper of a voice.

"Uh-huh. I was wishing they had left earlier. I was so sleepy I could have dropped."

"So was I. I nearly died. I don't think I was ever so tired. I never even heard you getting out this morning."

Percy sat in the rocking-chair and opened the paper wide. He read the comics. Susie leaned over his shoulder, and said, "What is Jiggs doing to-night?" She started reading in her slow way when he let the paper fall and stood up, saying, "Let's eat, Suse. I'm damned hungry."

Suse put the potatoes on the pie-tin on the table, and poured the tea.

Percy had fair straight hair, parted in the middle. It flopped across his forehead on either side. He sat stooped, his pointed face near the plate. He talked very little, as was his habit. Suse never bothered him much

then because she knew he didn't like it. Besides he was tired and it wasn't just right to bother him. She must help him. They ought to pull together, since they were living together. Suse thought of Mrs. Webber up in Rosedale whom she used to work for, and of how she had taught her to look at things like that. Percy and she would always be together. No one else should count so much as Perce. It was queer when she thought of it, and it made her look at Perce more closely.

"Want some tea, Perce?"

"All right," he said, mopping his plate with a slice of white bread. Then he sipped his tea, his elbows on the table.

"Do you want a cake?" she said.

"Well . . . I guess so. Gee I wish we had a pie."

"Let's hope we will some day soon."

"Huh?"

Suse gave a little laugh, and said, "When you're a real traveller, out on the road."

Perce said, "We'll get one Saturday night."

"You'd do all right on the other, though," Suse said.

"Say, didn't Ethel look swell last night?"

"Yes, didn't she, with her hair cut. She had it curled."

"It wasn't that, was it?" Perce said.

"Sure."

"I thought she looked brighter than usual."

"She thinks I ought to get mine done."

Perce fell silent, and Suse got afraid. Perce didn't like her to get her hair done at all. He was so queer that way. She was sorry she had mentioned it.

It was going to be hard to get her's cut, Percy kept the change so well. She was thinking a lot about it lately. She would tell him to leave some money in the morning for bread and soap and things. She would get the change.

She didn't ask till she was slipping into bed. He had gone earlier, and lay doubled up, making a loud noise breathing so hard. She stretched along under the cool sheets and lay back relaxing.

"Perce," she called. "Perce."

The breathing stopped and he raised his head. "What is it?"

"When you're going in the morning don't forget to leave some change. I want to get some things."

"All right." He said after a while, "What are you going to get?"

"Bread, and soap, and there are no potatoes."

Perce said nothing. Her face sunk into the pillow. She thought what a time they would have when he had a good job. They would have a flat, or no, an apartment with an electric stove where she could really make things. Make many things. She began to imagine the different things. Then she was asleep.

Perce left a two-dollar bill in the morning. Suse kept fifteen cents of the change. She was afraid to keep more for fear he would miss it.

Perce wanted new underwear, and a warmer cap, but these could not be got for a while. She felt guilty about the fifteen cents when he said he was saving up for the clothes. But she kept the three nickels in her stocking. She was afraid he would find them. Supposing she had an accident. Burn her foot with hot water

from the kettle, and he would pull off the stocking. It frightened her to think how mad he would get.

Bill and Ethel came over about one night a week, and they played seven-up, with matches. They would have a lunch afterwards. Soda-biscuits and cheese and coffee. Perce enjoyed those nights. He said it did a fellow good after a week's grind ringing at doors. A fellow needed company, a good lively party. They had good fun, Suse thought. And Mrs. Heenan didn't mind, so long as they didn't go to bed afterwards and leave the lights burning. She was a good soul and Suse liked to oblige her. She was giving Perce the rooms cheap at seventeen dollars a month. She had given them most of the furniture too, the cupboard and table, and chairs. Perce had done well with her. Suse felt bound to help him, and apart from the odd nickels she got a thrill out of it. She loved Perce. She looked forward to Bill and Ethel coming over because of the good it would do Perce.

Suse had fifty-five cents in two weeks. She kept it now in a handkerchief in the lining of her overcoat, slipping it in there through a hole in her pocket. Perce had not missed it. But she waited till near Christmas to get her hair done, as it was only another two weeks. And besides Perce would not mind it so much. He would be in good humour.

Perce sold a lot of baskets that last week, he made twenty-four dollars and seventy-five cents. That was a dandy week. They were able to buy little things for each other and for Bill and Ethel. Perce gave Suse a two-dollar bill to buy presents and she took the opportunity to get her hair done. It dumbfounded Perce. He said, "Didn't you buy anything?"

She got confidential and told about the nickels. He didn't say anything. But he wouldn't say she looked fine. He was a little bit stubborn, she thought. She knew he liked it though by the way he looked at her. He didn't say one nasty thing. Perce was all right after all. She always knew they could get along together.

Perce spent a lot of money for Christmas dinner, and they had Bill and Ethel over. Suse had not seen him so happy since they were married. He was a little devil, she told Ethel. They had a good day.

Perce couldn't sell any more sewing-baskets after Christmas, and he quit the Victoria House-Utensil Company, and started with another place that enlarged photographs. He had to lug around a big suit-case that was his sample-bag. He made a dollar and fifteen cents in two days. He said then he would quit and try to land a real job. He went out to the west end of the city to a rubber factory where he knew a foreman slightly, and the fellow told him to come back in about ten days. Perce said to Suse that it sounded pretty good, and that he would wait and see. He wouldn't take any more canvassing jobs. He said, "I'm sick of the damn dirty work. I'm sick of it."

Suse didn't know what to say other than that it would be dandy if he could get a steady job.

Perce went down-town one morning without telling her why. She didn't think much of it till a car came in the afternoon and a man got down and came into the hall, and she could hear Mrs. Heenan saying, "I think you'll find Mrs. Bone at home anyway."

He came upstairs, grunting on the steps. He was burly, of middle age, and carried a derby hat. He said,

"Mrs. Percy Bone ? I'm from the Relief Office." Susie didn't know what to say. She had to answer a lot of questions about how they were getting along, and the man made notes with a nice pen in a little black book of which he seemed very proud. He went away without saying "Good-day" even.

When Perce came he said he had been down to the Relief Office all right. He said the devils couldn't let people starve. They'd a right to split up some of their dough. He'd given them a pretty good story.

Suse went about getting the dinner of fried potatoes and sausages without talking. She didn't know what to think of it.

A basket of groceries came that afternoon. Susie said, "Oh, Perce, don't you have to pay at all?"

"Not a bit."

Susie wondered. Perce was a good manager all right. She would save all she could.

Perce stayed in bed most of the afternoon. It snowed and a hard wind sounded against the storm-window in the bedroom. The sun shone only at times. People in the streets kept their collars up. Suse sat at the window reading old magazines that she knew almost by heart. She saw a lot of people going towards the park, with skates. She wished she was one of the girls in sweaters and knickers.

At six Perce got up and went downstairs to 'phone, and Suse, listening at the bannister, heard him call up Bill and ask him to come over and bring Ethel. She was glad. When Perce came up he told her to give them a good lunch now that there was lots of grub.

They played cards and had a big lunch. Bill and Ethel didn't leave till one o'clock. They said they had never enjoyed such a lunch.

Perce took a rest every day by not getting up till noon. When he went to see the foreman at the rubber factory he was told to come back in about seven days, that there ought to be something doing then. Perce was quite down about it, and told Suse he had only a couple of dollars. It frightened her.

They ate dinner without talking. Perce went in the bedroom and shut the door, and when she peeked later he was in bed asleep. She felt sorry. He had such a lot to think about.

With the few dishes washed and the place straightened up, Suse got restless. She wanted to get out. In a flash she thought of Mrs. Webber, and she thought how fine it would be if she could make a few dollars there. She got on her coat and hat and rubbers and spats and tip-toed out so as not to wake Perce.

Mrs. Webber was glad to see her, and looked sorry at hearing of trouble, and said she guessed she could give her something to do for a couple of days a week. Then she said, "I wish you had never left me, Susie."

Susie was embarassed.

"You would have done better to stay with me," Mrs. Webber added.

Susie thought about it on the way home. It wasn't exactly nice of Mrs. Webber to say that. It was easy to see she didn't like Perce. It was strange to think how few people really knew Perce as she knew him.

Susie got two dollars from Mrs. Webber the next day. She got a lunch too. She wondered most of the

time how Perce was getting along. She was quite happy to be able to get little things on the way home.

Perce didn't ask her for the change. He was going about in his slippers. He needed the rest anyway.

Suse didn't rest till she got something to do on the other days of the week. And it was Mrs. Webber who got her the job of selling two-dollar knife-sharpeners. She phoned all her friends to buy one. Suse sold six on the first day. She made a dollar on each sharpener.

Perce told her when she got home that Mrs. Heenan had asked for the weekly rent and that he had had to go down to the Relief Office to get it. They could be a cubby bunch down there when they felt like it.

Susie said, "Mrs. Heenan wasn't sore, was she?"

"Oh no. I'm going down after supper to give it to her."

Suse leaned over the bannister when he went down. She heard Mrs. Heenan thank him, and saying she was like the rest of people, that she had some bills to pay.

Perce said, "You don't know where a fellow could get a job, do you?"

Suse stopped breathing. Perhaps Mrs. Heenan knew.

Mrs. Heenan said, "Well, you're out oftener than I am. I haven't the faintest idea."

"You know," Perce went on, "I'm kind of promised a job out in the west end at the Gutta Percha works. But I'd like to make some money in the meantime."

"Do you think you will be starting out there then?"

"Well, yes."

"Is it very far? Will you be able to go from here?"

Perce said with a chuckle, "Well hardly. It's about an hour on the car."

Percy was laughing when he came up. "I thought I'd establish a little bit of credit."

"She didn't know of anything?"

"No, she didn't. Gee, I wish she did."

Susie made fourteen dollars in the next week. But Perce went down one afternoon to the Relief Office and got some more rent money. He was looking better than he had been for some time. The rest in the mornings was doing him good. Susie giggled when he said he had slept till noon. "You're a sleepyhead," she said.

Bill came over one night with two tickets for a dance. Suse said to herself she was never so glad, because Perce could enjoy himself. The four of them went to the dance, and did not get home till after two.

Perce went downstairs the next morning with the rent-money. He came up very red. Suse got scared. "What's the matter, Perce?"

"She gave me a week's notice. The old devil."

Suse looked amazed.

"Tried to give me the devil for not working. Said I shouldn't be letting you go out to work."

"Oh Perce, and what did you say?"

"I couldn't say much. Was just going to tell her to go to hell when that son of hers came in. You know him. That big devil."

Suse felt her eyes fill.

She woke the next morning with a headache. Perce had gone out early. She went down to phone Mrs. Webber that she wasn't feeling well and wouldn't be up. Mrs. Heenan came in from the kitchen. Suse hurried

to get back upstairs but the woman called her, and Suse leaned over the bannister, her face hot, and eyes dim.

Mrs. Heenan gave Perce an awful rating. Suse nodded when the woman asked if her headache didn't come from working. She said she detested Mr. Bone for lying up in bed till noon. They talked for nearly half-an-hour. Suse cried some, and got confidential because of Mrs. Heenan acting so motherly, and said she wished at times that she had never married, that she'd rather be at Webbers' where there was a good home. But Perce had wanted to marry. Suse shrugged her shoulders, she felt so guiltless of the trouble at the time.

Suse wasn't talking to Mrs. Heenan again, because she was working nearly every day. Perce stayed at the flat, packing up. Susie was afraid to tell Mrs. Webber about it for fear she would want her to leave Perce and go back to work. She was afraid of Mrs. Webber's ability to talk well. As things were, there was nothing for it but to move off without mentioning it at all. Susie felt guilty at this little bit of deception. She liked Mrs. Webber.

They moved from the flat on a dull frosty day. Bill had rented an old Ford to cart their stuff. They were going down to a room on Queen Street, a place over a store. Suse hadn't seen it. She waited up in the flat till the last furniture was moved. Bill and Percy came for her in the car. And she carried down some of the pictures and a cupid-doll electric lamp she had for the dresser.

Mrs. Heenan's son opened the door for Percy and Bill to carry out the box of dishes. He didn't say anything.

Susie knew he was sore about Perce talking to his mother. She was afraid he would say something nasty. She didn't see Mrs. Heenan at all, and she was glad for she felt that if she had, she would have left their new address and that would have made Perce sore. But there was nobody around except the son. She knew his name was Jack. He was good-looking. He had a good job with big money, so the mother had told her. She didn't speak to him, though. She walked ahead of Percy and Bill out to the old Ford, thinking how cold it would be with no top on the car.

SIR WATSON TYLER

By HARVEY O'HIGGINS

Tyler, Sir Watson, K.C.B. *b.* Coulton, Ont., May 24, 1870; ed. pub. schools, Univ. of Toronto, grad. 1891; *m.* Alicia Janes, 1893; Pres. Coulton Street Ry. Co., Coulton Gas and Electric Co., Farmers' Trust Co., Mechanics' Bank of Canada, Janes Electric Auto Co., etc. Donor Coulton Conservatory of Music, Mozart Hall, etc. Founder Coulton Symphony Orchestra, Beethoven Choir, etc. Conservative leader. Senate, 1911. Privy Council, Minister without portfolio, 1912. Knighted 1915 for services to the Empire.—*Canada's Men of Mark.*

1

THE stairs that Wat descended—

(He had been christened "Wat", not "Watson". He made it "Watson" later. I am writing of the fall of 1892, when he was twenty-odd years old.)

The stairs that Wat descended on that crucial Sunday morning had been designed by an architect who had aspired to conceal the fact that they were, after all, stairs. He had disguised them with cushioned corner-seats and stained-glass windows, with arches of fretwork and screens of spindles, with niches and turns and exaggerated landings, until they were almost wholly ornamental and honorific. They remained, however, stairs—just as the whole house remained a house, in spite of everything that had been done to make it what *The Coulton Advertiser* called a "prominent residence". And to Wat, that morning, those stairs were painfully

nothing but stairs, leading him directly from a bedroom which he had been reluctant to leave down to a dining-room which he was loath to enter. In the bedroom, since daylight, he had been making up his mind to tell his family something that must soon be told to them. He had decided to tell them at the breakfast-table; and he could have forgiven the architect if the stairs had been a longer respite than they were.

In a dining-room that had been made as peevish with decoration as the stairs he found his father, his mother, and his two sisters already busy with breakfast and a Sunday paper, which, in those early days of Coulton, was imported across the border from Buffalo. His sisters were both younger than he and both pertly independent of their elders, and they did not look up from the illustrated sections of fashion and the drama which they were reading, aside, as they ate. His father seemed always to seize on his hours of family leisure to let his managerial brain lounge and be at rest in the comfortable corpulence of his body; he was stirring his coffee in a humorous reflectiveness that was wholly self-absorbed. Mrs. Tyler smiled apprehensively at her son, but she did not speak. She did not care to disturb the harmony of the domestic silence. Both the harmony and the silence were rare and pleasant to her.

Wat sat down, and humped himself over his fruit, and began to eat with an evident lack of zest. The dining-room maid came and went rustling by. Mrs. Tyler brushed at a persistent crumb among the ribbons on the ample bosom of her morning wrapper, and regarded Wat from time to time with maternal solicitude.

He had once been a delicate, fat boy—before he took a four years' college course in athletics—and she had never been quite convinced of the permanency of his conversion to health. He had come home late the previous night, and he looked pale to her. His lack of appetite was unusual enough to be alarming. He did not begin his customary Sunday morning dispute with his sisters about "hogging" the picture pages of the newspaper.

She broke out at last: "What is it, Wat? Aren't you well?"

"N-no," he stammered, taken by surprise. "I'm all right."

His sisters glanced at him. He was unthinkingly afraid that they might see his secret in his eyes. They had all the devilish penetration of the young female. And he looked down his nose into his coffee-cup with an ostentatious indifference to them as he drank.

Naturally they accepted his manner as a challenge to them. Millie remarked to Ollie that he seemed thin—which was far from true. Ollie replied, with her eyes in her newspaper, that he was probably going into a "decline". He pretended to pay no attention to them; but his mother interfered, as they had expected her to.

"You've no business, now, making fun of Wat about his health," she said. "You know he isn't strong. He's big—but he's soft."

"Soft!" the girls screamed. "Paw, Maw says Wat's soft!"

It *is* incredible, but—at that day, to everybody in the household except his mother—Sir Watson Tyler was a joke. And it *is* incredible, but—in spite of all the

honourable traditions of convention to the contrary—these were the family relations in the Tyler home.

Mr. Tyler turned an amused eye on his wife, and she appealed to him with her usual helpless indignation. "Well, I think you ought to speak to the girls, Tom. I don't think it's very nice of them to make fun of their mother."

"But, Maw!" Millie laughed. "You say such funny things we can't help it."

"I don't. You twist everything I say. Wat *isn't* strong. You ought to be ashamed of yourselves."

She scolded them in a voice that was unconvincing, and they replied to her as if she were an incompetent governess for whom they had an affectionate disrespect.

Wat began to fortify himself with food for the announcement which he had to make. He ate nervously—determinedly—even, at last, doggedly. His mother retired into silence. His sisters continued to read.

When they got to discussing some of the society news he saw an opportunity of leading up to his subject; and when they were talking of a girl whom they had met during the summer, at the lake shore, he put in, "Did you ever meet Miss Janes there?"

They turned their heads without moving their shoulders. "*Lizzie* Janes?"

The tone was not enthusiastic. He cleared his throat before he answered, "Yes."

Millie said, superbly casual: "Uh-huh. Isn't she a *freak*!"

His face showed the effort he made to get that remark down, though he swallowed it in silence. His mother came to his rescue. "Who is she, Wat?"

"A girl I met this summer. I went over there with Jack Webb."

His sisters found his manner strained. They eyed him with suspicion. His mother asked, "What is she like?"

"Well," Millie put in, "she has about as much style—!"

Wat reddened. "She hasn't *your* style, anyway. She doesn't look as if her clothes—"

He was unable to find words to describe how his sisters looked. They looked as if their limp garments had been poured cold over their shoulders and hung dripping down to their bone-thin ankles.

"I'm glad you like her," Millie said. "She's a sight."

He had determined to be politic. It was essential that he should be politic. Yet he, the future leader of a Conservative party, retorted: "It'd do you good to know a few girls like her. The silly crowd *you* go with!"

"Lizzie Janes! That frump!"

He appealed to his mother. "I certainly think *you* ought to call on them, mother. They've been mighty good to me this summer while you were away."

"Well, Wat," she said, "if you wish it—"

"You'll do no such thing!" Millie cried.

The squabble that followed did not end in victory for Wat. It was Millie's contention that they were not bound to receive every "freak" that he might "pick up"; and Mrs. Tyler—who, in social matters, was usually glad to remain in the quiet background of the family—put herself forward inadequately in Wat's behalf. She succumbed to her husband's decision that she "had

better leave it to the girls"; he ended the dispute indifferently by leaving the table; and Wat realized, with desperation, that he had failed in his diplomatic attempt to engage the family interest for Miss Janes by introducing mention of her and her virtues into the table talk.

2

He went back up-stairs to his bedroom and locked himself in with his chagrin and his sentimental secret. It was a secret that showed in a sort of gloomy wistfulness as he stood gazing out the glass door that opened, from one angle of his room, upon a little balcony—an ornamental balcony whose turret top adorned a corner of the Tyler roof with an aristocratically useless excrescence. You will notice it in the picture of "Sir Watson Tyler's Boyhood Home" in The Canadian Magazine's article about him. From the door of this balcony, looking over the autumn maples of the street, through a gap between the opposite houses, Wat could see the chimney of the Janes house.

It was a remarkable pile of bricks, that chimney. All around it were houses that existed only as neighbours to that one supreme house. And around those were still others, less and less important, containing the undistinguished mass of lives that made up the City of Coulton in which she lived. The heart of interest in Coulton had once been his own home—as, for example, when he came back to it from college for his holidays. Now, when he returned in the evenings from his father's office he found himself on the circumference of a circle of which Miss Jane's home was the vital centre. H

saw his own room merely as a window looking toward hers. And this amazing displacement had been achieved so imperceptibly that he had only just become acutely conscious of it himself.

His mother and his sisters had spent the summer on the clay-lipped lake shore that gave the name of "Surfholm" to the Tyler cottage in the society news of *The Coulton Advertiser;* and Wat and his father had remained in town, from Mondays to Saturdays, to attend to the real-estate and investment business that supplied the Tyler income. (They also owned the Coulton horse-car line, but it supplied no income for them.) On a memorable Tuesday evening Wat had "stopped in" at the Janeses' on his way down-town with his friend Webb, to let Webb return to Miss Janes some music that he had borrowed. And, by a determining accident of fate, as they approached the lamplit veranda of the Janes cottage, Alicia Janes was sitting behind the vine-hung lattice, reading a magazine, while her mother played the piano.

Observe: There was no veranda on the Tyler "residence"; no one ever sat outdoors there; and no one ever played anything but dance-music on the Tyler piano. Alicia Janes looked romantic under the yellow light, in the odour of flowers, with the background of green leaves about her. Her mother had more than a local reputation as a teacher of music, and the melody that poured out of the open French windows of the parlour was eloquent, impassioned, uplifting. The introductions were made in a low voice, so as not to disturb the music, and it was in silence that Alicia put out a frank hand to

Wat and welcomed him with the strong grasp of a violinist's fingers.

Wat's ordinary tongue-tied diffidence went unnoticed under these circumstances. He was able to sit down without saying anything confused or banal. The powerful music, professionally interpreted, filled him with stately emotions, to which he moved and sat with an effect of personal dignity and repose.

These may seem to be details of small importance. But life has a way of concealing its ominous beginnings and of being striking only when its conclusions are already foregone. So death is more dramatic, but less significant, than the unperceived inception of the fatal incidents that end in death. And in the seemingly trivial circumstances of Wat's introduction to the Janes veranda there were hidden the germs of vital alterations for him—alterations that were to affect the life of the whole community of Coulton, and, if the King's birthday list is to be believed, were to be important even to the British Empire.

Alicia Janes was dressed in a belted black gown, like an art student, with a starched Eton collar and cuffs. Instead of the elaborate coiffure of the day's style she wore her dark hair simply parted and coiled low on her neck in a Rossetti mode. Her long olive face would have been homely if it had not been for her eyes. They welcomed Wat with the touching smile of a sensitive independence, and he did not notice that her lips were thin and her teeth prominent. In dress and manner she was unlike any of the young women whom he had met in the circle of his sisters' friends; if she had been like

them, the memory of past embarrassments would probably have inhibited every expression of his mind. Her surroundings were different from any to which he had been accustomed; and, as a simple consequence, he was quite unlike himself in his accustomed surroundings. Perhaps it was the music most of all that helped him. It carried him as a good orchestra might carry an awkward dancer, uplifted into a sudden confident grace.

When she asked him some commonplace questions in an undertone he replied naturally, forgetting himself. He listened to the music and he looked at her, seriously thrilled. When Webb asked her if she wouldn't play the violin, and she replied that she always played badly before strangers, Wat begged her in a voice of genuine anxiety not to consider him a stranger. She said, "I'll play for you the next time you come." And he was so grateful for the implied invitation to come again that his "Thank you" was sincere beyond eloquence. He even met her mother without embarrassment, although Mrs. Janes was an enigmatic-looking, dark woman with a formidable manner. She became more friendly when she understood that he was the son of the Tylers of Queen's Avenue, and he felt that he was accepted as a person of some importance, like herself. That was pleasant.

After a half-hour on the veranda he went on downtown with Webb, as calm outwardly as if he had parted from old friends, and so deeply happy in the prospect of seeing her again that he was quite unaware of what had happened to him. The following afternoon he telephoned to her eagerly. And he was back with her that

night for hours in the lamplight, among the vines—without Webb—talking, smiling, and listening with profound delight while she played the violin to her mother's piano.

And there was an incredible difference between Wat on the veranda and Wat at home. Under his own roof he was a large-headed, heavy-shouldered, apparently slow-witted, shy youth, who read in his room, exercised alone in a gymnasium which he had put in his attic during a college vacation, wrote long letters to former classmates in other cities, and, going out to the post-box, mooned ponderously around the streets till all hours. He had never anything much to say. Although he never met any one if he could avoid it, and suffered horribly in a drawing-room, he was—like most shy men—particular to the point of effeminacy about his appearance. He bathed and shaved and brushed his hair and fussed over his clothes absurdly, morning and night. He was, in fact, in many ways ridiculous.

On the Janes veranda he was nothing of the sort. As the son of the owner of the Coulton street-car line and the Tyler real estate, he was a young man of social importance in a home where the mother earned a living by teaching music and the daughter had only the prospect of doing the same. He was a man of the practical world, whose opinions were authoritative. He was well dressed and rather distinguished-looking, with what has since been called "a brooding forehead". He was fond of reading, and he had the solid knowledge of a slow student who assimilated what he read. Alicia deferred to him with an inspiring trust in his wisdom and his experience. She deferred even to his judgment in music—for which, it transpired, he had an acute ear and a fresh

appreciation. She played to him as eagerly as a painter might show his sketches to a wealthy enthusiast who was by way of becoming a collector. Their evenings together were full of interest, of promise, of talk and laughter, of serious converse and melodic emotion.

There was in those days, in Coulton, no place of summer amusement to which a young pair could make an excuse of going in order to be together, so that Wat was never called on to make a public parade of his devotion. The best that he could do was to take Alicia to her church. But it was not *his* church. He was not known there. Mrs. Janes was the church organist; Alicia often added the music of her violin; and she sat always in the choir. Wat, in a back pew down-stairs was inconspicuous and not coupled with her. It was for these reasons that his interest in Miss Janes was not at once generally known. That was entirely accidental.

But it was not an accident that he did not make it known to his family. At first he foresaw and dreaded only the amusement of his sisters. Wat "girling"! What next! And then he shrank from the effect on Alicia Janes of getting the family point of view on him. It was almost as if he had been romanticizing about himself and knew that his family would tell her the truth. And finally, as guilty as if he were leading a double life, he confronted the problem that haunts all double lives—the problem of either keeping them apart or of uniting them in any harmony. As long as his family had been at "Surfholm" it had not been necessary that they should recognize Miss Janes, but, now that they were back in town, every day that they ignored her was an insult to her and an accusation of him.

He had to tell them. He had to put into words the beautiful secret of his feeling for her. "That freak!" He had to introduce Alicia to his home and to the shame of his belittlement in his home, and let his contemptuous sisters disillusion her about him.

A horrible situation! Believe me or not, of a career so distinguished as Sir Watson's this was the most crucial point, the most agonized moment. It is not even hinted at in the official accounts of his career, yet never in his life afterward was he to be so racked with emotion, so terrified by the real danger of losing everything in the world that could make the world worth living in. And never afterward was he forced to choose a course that meant so much not only to himself, but to the world in which he lived.

3

That is why I have chosen this autumn Sunday of 1892 as the most notable day to scrutinize and chronicle in a character-study of Sir Watson Tyler. I should like to commemorate every moment of it, but, as the memoir-writers say—when their material is running short—space forbids. You will have to imagine him trying to dress in order to take Miss Janes to church: struggling through a perspiring ecstasy of irresolution in the choice of a necktie, straining into a Sunday coat that made him look round-shouldered because of the bulging muscularity of his back, cursing his tailor, hating his hands because they hung red and bloated below his cuffs, hating his face, his moon face, his round eyes, his pudding of a forehead, and all those bodily characteristics that were

to mark him, to his later biographers, as a born leader among men, "physically as well as mentally dominant".

He never went to church, to his family's knowledge, so he had to wait until they had gone in order to avoid inconvenient questions. They were always late. He watched them, behind the curtains of his window, till they rounded the circular driveway and reached the street. Five minutes later he was cutting across the lawn, scowling under a high hat that always pinched his forehead, on his way to the Janeses'.

He did not arrive there. He decided that he was too late. He decided he could not arrive there without having first made up his mind what to do. And he turned aside to wander through the residential streets of Coulton, pursued by the taunts of the church-bells. He came to the weed-grown vacant lots and the withered fields of market-gardeners in a northern suburb that was yet to be nicknamed "Tylertown". He ended beside Smith's Falls, where the Coulton River drops twenty feet over a ridge into the Coulton Valley; and he sat down on a rock, in his high hat, on the site of the present power-house—his power-house—that has put the light and heat of industrial life into the whole community. He resolved to see his mother privately, tell her the truth, get her to help him with his father, and let his sisters do their worst.

But it was not easy to see Mrs. Tyler privately in her home on Sunday. They had a long and solemn noon dinner that was part of the ritual of the day, and after dinner she always sat with her husband and her daughters in the sitting-room upstairs, indulging her domestic soul in the peace of a family reunion that seemed only

possible to the Tylers on Sunday afternoon when they were gorged like a household of pythons. Wat retired to his bedroom. Every twenty minutes he wandered downstairs, passed the door of the sitting-room slowly, and returned up the back stairs by stealth. They heard him pacing the floor overhead. Millie listened to him thoughtfully. The younger sister, Ollie, was trying to write letters on note-paper of robin's-egg blue, and she blamed him for all the difficulties of composition; it was so distracting to have him paddling around like that. Finally, when his mother heard him creaking down the stairs for the fourth time, she called out: "Wat! What *is* the matter with you? If you're restless, why don't you go for a walk?"

He answered, hastily, "I'm going," and continued down to the lower hall. Millie waited to hear the front door shut behind him. She had just remembered what he said at breakfast about Jack Webb taking him to see the Janes girl. She went at once to the library to telephone.

And she came flying back with the news that while they had been away Wat had been spending almost every evening with Lizzie Janes; that he had been going to see her since their return; that Jack Webb thought they were engaged. "And the first thing *we* know," she said, "he'll be married to her."

Mr. Tyler tilted one eyebrow. He thought he understood that there were things that were not *in* Wat.

"Well, what's the matter with him, then?" Millie demanded. "Why has he been hiding it, and sneaking off to see her and never saying a word about it, if he isn't ashamed of it and afraid to tell us? They've roped

him in. That's what I think. Lizzie Janes is a regular old maid now. If she isn't engaged to Wat, she intends to be. No one else would ever marry her. I bet they've been working Wat for all they're worth. They're as *poor*—"

Her father continued incredulous.

"Well," she cried, "Jack Webb says Wat's been going to church with her twice a Sunday."

Wat's indolent aversion to church-going being well known, this was the most damning piece of evidence she could have produced against him.

Mrs. Tyler pleaded, "She can't be a *bad* girl if she goes to church twice a—"

"What difference does that make?" Millie demanded. "It doesn't make it any better for *us*, does it?"

"I'll speak to Wat," Mrs. Tyler promised, feebly.

"It's no use speaking to Wat! *He* has nothing to do with it. Any one can turn Wat around a little finger."

"Do you know her?" Mr. Tyler asked.

"I used to know her—before she went to—when she was at school here. She used to wear thick stockings, and woollen mitts."

Ollie added, as the final word of condemnation, "Home-made!"

Mr. Tyler may have felt that he did not appreciate the merit of these facts. He made a judicial noise in his throat and said nothing.

"She's older than any of us—than Wat, too."

"Well," he said, reaching for his newspaper, "I suppose Wat'll do what he likes. He's not likely to do anything remarkable one way or the other."

"He's not going to marry Lizzie Janes," Millie declared. "Not if *I* can help it."

"Millie," her mother scolded, "you've no right interfering in Wat's affairs. He's older than you are—"

"It isn't only Wat's affair," she cried. "She isn't only going to marry Wat. We're thrown in with the bargain. I guess we have something to say."

"Tom!" Mrs. Tyler protested. "If you let her—"

"Well," he ruled, "Wat hasn't even taken the trouble to ask us what we thought about it. I don't feel called on to help him. It means more to the girls than it does to us, in any case. They'll have to put up with her for the rest of her life."

"I guess *not!*" Millie said, confidently.

"Now, Millie!" her mother threatened. "If you—"

"If you want Lizzie Janes and her mother in this family," Milly said, "*I* don't. I guess it won't be hard to let Wat and them know it, either. And if *you* won't, she ended, defiantly, as she turned away, "*I will!*"

She went out and Ollie followed. Mrs. Tyler dropped back in her chair, gazing speechlessly at her husband. He caught her eye as he turned a page of his paper. "All right, now," he said. "Wait till Wat comes."

They waited. Millie did not. She distrusted her mother's partiality for Wat, and she distrusted her father's distaste for interfering in any household troubles. She trusted herself only, assured that if Wat's ridiculous misalliance was to be prevented it must be prevented by her; and she felt that it could be easily prevented, because it *was* ridiculous, because Wat was ridiculous, because Lizzie Janes was absurd. What was Wat's secrecy in the affair but a confession that he was ashamed of it? What was Lizzie Jane's sly silence but an evidence

that she had hoped to hook Wat before his family knew what was going on?

What indeed? She asked it of Ollie, and Ollie asked it of her. They had locked themselves in Millie's bedroom to consult together—Ollie sitting, tailor-wise, cross-legged on the bed, and Millie gesticulating up and down the room—in one of those angry councils of war against their elders in which they were accustomed to face the cynical facts of life with a frankness that would have amazed mankind.

4

And Wat, meantime, arrived at the door of the Janes house because it was impossible for him *not* to arrive there. Alicia greeted him with her usual unchanging, gentle smile. He began to explain why he had not come that morning to take her to church; that his family—

"There's some one here," she said, unheeding. "Some one who wants to meet you. My brother!" And touching him lightly on the shoulder, she turned him toward the parlour and ushered him in to meet his future in the shape of Howard Janes.

Janes was then a tall, gaunt, feverish-eyed, dark enthusiast, of an extraordinary mental and physical restlessness—a man who should have been a visionary, but had become an electrical engineer. He had been working on the project to develop electrical power at Niagara Falls, and in ten minutes he was describing to Wat the whole theory and progress of the work, past, present, and future. "In ten years," he said, "Niagara power will be shot all through this district for a hundred miles around, and here's Coulton asleep, with one of the

best power projects in Canada right under its nose. Where? Smith's Falls. And here *you* are, with a dead town, a dead street-car line, a lot of dead real estate, and the power to make the whole thing a gold-mine running to waste over that hill. Why, man, if it was an oil-field you'd be developing it like mad. Because it's electricity no one seems to see it. And in ten years it will be too late."

He talked to Wat as if Wat owned the car line, the real estate, the town itself, and when Wat glanced at Alicia she was *looking* at him as if he owned them. The power of that look was irresistible—hypnotic. He began to listen as if he owned the car lines and the real estate, to think as if he owned them, to ask questions, and finally to reply as if he owned them. Very grave, with his eyes narrowed, silent, he became a transportation magnate considering a development scheme proposed by an industrial promoter.

They were interrupted by the telephone in the hall. Alicia answered it. "It's for you," she said to Wat, looking at him significantly. "Your sister."

He went to the 'phone, puzzled. It was Millie's voice. "You're to come home at once," she said.

Wat asked, "What's the matter?"

"You know what's the matter," she snapped, "as well as I do. You're wanted home here at once." And while the meaning of that was slowly reaching him, through the preoccupied brain of the railroad magnate, she added, "I don't wonder you were ashamed to tell us!" and slapped up the receiver.

He stood a moment at the 'phone, pale. And in that moment history was made. He went back to Alicia,

face front, head up. She looked at him expectantly. "They want me to bring you to see them," he said.

It was what she had expected, he supposed. Mark it as the beginning of his great career. What she expected! There's the point. That's the secret, as I see it, of the making of Sir Watson Tyler.

After a moment's hesitation she went to put on her hat. He said to her brother: "Can you wait till we get back? We'll be only a few minutes. I want to go into this thing with you in detail." And when he was on the street with her he explained, merely: "I want you to meet mother. I don't suppose we'll see dad. He's always so busy he doesn't pay much attention to what goes on at home."

"I don't think I've ever seen any of your family," she said, "except your sisters." She was thinking of them as she used to see them in their school-days, in short dresses, giggling, and chewing candy in the street-cars.

"They're very young," Wat warned her, "and they've been spoiled. You mustn't mind if Millie— She's been allowed to do pretty much as she likes. Our life at home isn't like yours, you know. I think our house is too big. We seem to be—sort of separated in our rooms."

Strange! He appeared apologetic. She did not understand why—unless it was that he was fearful of her criticism of his family. She knew that they were not socially distinguished, except by newspaper notice; but she thought she had no reverence for social position. And he could hardly be apologizing for their income.

5

The house, as they approached it, was pretentious, but that was probably the architect's fault. It was modestly withdrawn behind its trees, its flower-beds, and its lawns. For a moment she saw herself, in her simple costume, coming to be passed upon by the eyes of an alien wealth. Wat was silent, occupied with his own thoughts. He rang absent-mindedly.

A maid opened a door on a hall that was architecturally stuffy and not furnished in the rich simplicity that Alicia had expected. And the sight of the drawing-room was a shock. It was overcrowded with pink-upholstered shell-shaped furniture that gave her a note of overdressed bad taste. The carpet was as richly gaudy as a hand-painted satin pincushion. The bric-a-brac, of a florid costliness, cluttered the mantelpieces and the table-tops like a tradesman's display. The pictures on the walls were the family photographs and steel engravings of an earlier home. It was a room of undigested dividends, and she thought that she began to see why Wat had been apologetic. To his credit he seemed uncomfortable in it. "I'll just tell them you're here," he said.

He left her there and went out to the stairs. Millie was coming down to see who had rung. "Well," she cried from a landing above him as he ascended resolutely, "will you tell us what you think you're doing with that Lizzie Janes?"

He caught her by the arm. He said in a voice that was new to her: "I've brought her to call on mother. Tell her she's here."

"You've brought her to—! I'll do nothing of the kind. You can just take her away again. *I* don't want her, and *they* don't want her." She had begun to raise her voice, with the evident intention of letting any one hear who would. "If she thinks she can—"

"That's enough!" He stopped her angrily, with his hand over her mouth. "You ought to be—"

She struggled with him, striking his hand away. "How *dare* you! If you think that Lizzie Janes—"

He was afraid that Alicia might hear it. He grabbed her up roughly and began to carry her upstairs, fighting with him, furious at the indignity—for he had caught her where he could, with no respect for her body or her clothes. No one, in years, had dared to lay hands on her, no matter what she did; the sanctity of her fastidious young person was an inviolable right to her; and Wat's assault upon it was brutal to her, degrading, atrocious. She became hysterical, in a clawed and tousled passion of shame and resentment. He carried her to her room, tossed her on to her bed, and left her, face down on her pillows, sobbing, outraged. She could have killed him—or herself.

He straightened his necktie and strode into the sitting-room.

"Why, Wat!" his mother cried. "What's the matter?"

"Miss Janes," he said, "is downstairs. I've brought her to call on you."

She rose, staring. His father looked at him, surprised, over the top of his paper. "Well," he demanded, "what's all this about Miss Janes, anyway?"

Wat gave him back his look defiantly. "She's the finest girl I've ever met. And I'm going to marry her, if I can."

"Oh," Mr. Tyler said, and returned to his news.

Ollie rushed out to find her sister.

Wat turned his amazing countenance on his mother.

"Yes, Wat," she replied to it—and went with him obediently.

6

Of the interview that followed in the drawing-room there were several conflicting reports made. Ollie slipped down quietly to hear the end of it—after a stupefying account from Millie of what had happened—but *her* report to Millie is negligible. From that night both the girls ceased to exist as factors in Wat's life; he saw them and heard them thereafter only absent-mindedly.

Mrs. Tyler's report was made in voluble excitement to her husband, who listened, frowning, over his cigar. "And, Tom, you wouldn't have known him," she said. "He wasn't like—like himself at all! It was so pretty. They're so in love with each other. She's such a sweet girl."

"Well," he grumbled, "I'll have nothing to do with it. It's in your department. If it was one of the girls it'd be different. I suppose Wat'll have to do his own marrying. He's old enough. I hope she'll make a man of him."

" 'A man of him'! She! Why, she's as— No, indeed! You ought to see the way *she* defers to *him*. She's as proud of him! And he's as *different*!"

He was unconvinced. "I'm glad to hear it. You'd better go and look after Millie. She accuses him of assault and battery."

"It serves her right. I'll not go near her. And, Tom," she said, "he wants to talk to you about a plan he has for the railway—for using electric light to run it, or something like that."

"Huh! Who put that in his head?"

"Oh, he made it up himself. Her brother's an engineer, and they've been talking about it."

"I suppose!" he said. "She'll be working the whole Janes family in on us." He snorted. "I'm glad some one's put something into his head besides eating and sleeping."

"Now, Tom," she pleaded, "you've got to be fair to Wat!"

"All right, Mary," he relented. "Run along and see Millie. I've had enough for *one* Sunday."

As for Alicia Janes, it was late at night when she made her report to her mother in a subdued tremble of excitement. She had overheard something of Wat's scuffle with Millie on the stairway, but she did not speak of it except to say: "I'm afraid the girls are awful. The youngest, Ollie, is overdressed and silly—with the manners of a spoiled child of ten. It's her mother's fault. She's one of those helpless big women. Wat must have got his qualities from his father."

"Did you find out why they hadn't called?"

"No-o. But I can guess."

"Yes?"

"Well, it isn't a nice thing to say, but I really think Wat's rather—as if he were ashamed of them. And I

don't wonder, mother! Their front room's furnished with that— Oh, and such bric-a-brac!" She paused. She hesitated. She blushed. "Wat asked me if I'd— You know he had never really spoken before, although I knew he—"

Her mother said, softly, "Yes?"

She looked down at the worn carpet. "And I really felt so sorry for him— The family's awful, I know, but he's so— I said I would."

7

She had said she would. And Wat, long after midnight, lying on his back in bed, staring up at the darkness, felt as if he were afloat on a current that was carrying him away from his old life with more than the power of Niagara. His mind was full of Howard Janes's plans for harnessing Smith's Falls, of electrifying the street railway, of lighting Coulton with electricity and turning the vacant Tyler lots of the northern suburb into factory sites. He was thinking of incorporations, franchises, capitalizations, stocks, bonds, mortgages, and loans. He had been talking them over with Janes for hours on the veranda, at the supper-table, on the street. There had been no music. As Wat was leaving he had spoken to Alicia hastily in the hall—asking her to marry him in fact—and she had said, "Oh, Wat!" clinging to his hands as he kissed her. He could still feel that tremulous confiding grasp of her strong fingers as she surrendered her life to him, depending on him, proud of him, humble to him. He shivered. He was afraid.

And that was to be only the first of many such frightened midnights. A thousand times he was to ask

himself: "What am I doing? Why have I gone into this business? It'll kill me! It'll worry me to death!" He had gone into it because Alicia had expected him to; but he did not know it. The maddest thing he ever did—

It was when the power scheme had been successfully floated, the street railway was putting out long radial lines along the country roads, and the gas company was willing to sell out to him in order to escape the inevitable clash of competition with his electric light. The banks suddenly began to make trouble about carrying him. He was in their debt for an appalling amount. He felt that he ought to prepare his wife for the worst. "Well, Wat," she said, reproachfully, when she understood him, "if the banks are going to bother you, I don't see why you don't get a bank of your own."

It was as if she thought he could buy a bank in a toy-shop. She expected it of him. Miracles! nothing but miracles! And it was the maddest thing he ever did, but he went after the moribund Farmers' Trust Company, got it with his father's assistance, reorganized it and put it on its feet, while he held up the weak-kneed power projects and Janes talked manufacturers into buying power sites. The Mechanics' Bank of Canada passed to him later, but by that time he was running, at "Tylertown", an automobile factory, a stone-crusher, a carborundum works, and the plant of Coulton's famous Eleco Breakfast Food, cooked by electricity, and the success of the whole city of Coulton was so involved with his fortunes that he simply could not be allowed to fail.

And here was the fact that made the whole thing possible: Janes had the vision and the daring necessary

to attempt their undertakings, but he could not have carried them out; whereas Wat would never have gone beyond the original power-house; but with Janes talking to him and Alicia looking at him he moved ahead with a stolid, conservative caution and a painstaking care of detail that made every move as safe and deliberate as a glacial advance. He worked day and night, methodically, with a ceaseless application that would have worn out a less solid and lethargic man. It was as if, having eaten and slept—and nothing else—for twenty years, he could do as he pleased about food now, and never rest at all. He was wonderful. His mind digested everything, like his stomach, slowly, but without distress. His shyness, now deeply concealed, made him silent, unfathomable. He had no friends, because he confided in no one; he was too diffident to do it. Behind his inscrutable silence he studied and watched the men with whom he had to work, moving like a quiet engineer among the machinery which he had started, and the uproar of it. And the moment he decided that a man was wrong he took him out and dropped him clean, without feeling, without any friendly entanglement to deter him, silently.

He had to go into politics to protect his franchises, and he became the "Big Business Interests" behind the local campaign; but he never made a public appearance; he managed campaign funds, sat on executive committees, was consulted by the party leaders, and passed upon policies and candidates. *The Coulton Advertiser* annoyed him, and he bought it. His wife had gathered about her a number of music-lovers, and they formed a

stringed orchestra that studied and played in the music-room of Wat's new home on the hill above "Tylertown". She expected him to be present, and he rarely failed. As a matter of fact, he seldom heard more than the first few bars of a composition, then, emotionalized, his brain excited, he sat planning, reviewing, advancing, and reconsidering his work. Music had that effect on him. It enlivened his lumbering mind. He became as addicted to it as if it were alcohol.

He followed his wife into a plan for the formation of a symphony orchestra, which he endowed. When there was no proper building for it he put up Mozart Hall and gave it to the city. She wanted to hear Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, so the orchestra had to be supplemented with a choir. He endowed the Coulton Conservatory of Music when she objected that she could not get voices or musicians because there was no way in Coulton to educate or train them. And in doing these things he gave Coulton its fame as a musical centre. (Lamplight on the veranda, and Mrs. Janes playing the piano behind the open French windows!)

It was the campaign against reciprocity that put him in the Senate. He believed that reciprocity with the United States would ruin his factories. He headed the committee of Canadian manufacturers that raised the funds for the national campaign against the measure. The consequent defeat of the Liberal party put his friends in power. They rewarded him with a Senatorship. He was opposed to taking it, but his wife expected him to. He went into the Cabinet, as Minister without portfolio, a year later. It was inevitable. He was the financial

head of the party; they had to have him at their government councils. When the war with Germany broke out he gave full pay to all of his employees that volunteered. He endowed a battery of machine-guns from Coulton. Every factory that he controlled he turned into a munition-works. He contributed lavishly to the Red Cross. And, of course, he was knighted.

It is an open secret that he will probably be made Lord Coulton when the readjustment of the colonial affairs of the Empire takes him to London. He will be influential there; he has the silent, conservative air of ponderous authority that England trusts. And Lady Tyler is a poised, gracious, and charming person who will be popular socially. She, of course, is of no importance to the Empire. She still looks at Wat worshipfully, without any suspicion that it was she who made him—not the slightest.

I do not know how much of the old Wat is left in him. His silence covers him. It is impossible to tell how greatly the quality and texture of his mind may have changed under the exercise and labour of his gigantic undertakings. I saw him when he was in New York to hear the Coulton orchestra and choir give the Ninth Symphony, to the applause of the most critical. ("The scion of a noble house," one of the papers called him.) And it certainly seemed impossible—although I swear I believe it is true—that the solid magnificences of the man and his achievements were all due to the fact that when he came back from the Janes telephone to confront the expectancy of Alicia Janes, on that Sunday night in 1892, he said, "They want me to bring you to see them," instead of saying, "They want me at home."

THE EPAULETTES

By SIR GILBERT PARKER

OLD ATHABASCA, chief of the Little Crees, sat at the door of his lodge, staring down into the valley where Fort Pentecost lay, and Mitawawa his daughter sat near him, fretfully pulling at the fringe of her fine buckskin jacket. She had reason to be troubled. Fyles the trader had put a great indignity upon Athabasca. A factor of twenty years before, in recognition of the chief's merits and in reward of his services, had presented him with a pair of epaulettes, left in the Fort by some officer in Her Majesty's service. A good, solid, honest pair of epaulettes, well fitted to stand the wear and tear of those high feasts and functions at which the chief paraded them upon his broad shoulders. They were the admiration of his own tribe, the wonder of others, the envy of many chiefs. It was said that Athabasca wore them creditably, and was no more immobile and grand-mannered than became a chief thus honoured above his kind.

But the years went, and there came a man to Fort Pentecost who knew not Athabasca. He was young, and tall and strong, had a hot temper, knew naught of human nature, was possessed by a pride more masterful than his wisdom, and a courage stronger than his tact.

He was ever for high-handedness, brooked no interference, and treated the Indians more as Company's serfs than as Company's friends and allies. Also, he had an eye for Mitawawa, and found favour in return, though to what depth it took a long time to show. The girl sat high in the minds and desires of the young braves, for she had beauty of a heathen kind, a deft and dainty finger for embroidered buckskin, a particular fortune with a bow and arrow, and the fleetest foot. There were mutterings because Fyles the white man came to sit often in Athabasca's lodge. He knew of this, but heeded not at all. At last Konto, a young brave who very accurately guessed at Fyles' intentions, stopped him one day on the Grey Horse Trail, and in a soft, indolent voice begged him to prove his regard in a fight without weapons, to the death, the survivor to give the other burial where he fell. Fyles was neither fool nor coward. It would have been foolish to run the risk of leaving Fort and people masterless for an Indian's whim; it would have been cowardly to do nothing. So he whipped out a revolver, and bade his rival march before him to the Fort, which Konto very calmly did, begging the favour of a bit of tobacco as he went.

Fyles demanded of Athabasca that he should sit in judgment, and should at least banish Konto from his tribe, hinting the while that he might have to put a bullet into Konto's refractory head if the thing were not done. He said large things in the name of the H.B.C., and was surprised that Athabasca let them pass unmoved. But that chief, after long consideration, during which he drank Company's coffee and ate Company's pemmican, declared that he could do nothing: for Konto

had made a fine offer, and a grand chance of a great fight had been missed. This was in the presence of several petty officers and Indians and woodsmen at the Fort. Fyles had vanity and a nasty temper. He swore a little, and with words of bluster went over and ripped the epaulettes from the chief's shoulders, as a punishment, a mark of degradation. The chief said nothing. He got up, and reached out his hands as if to ask them back; and when Fyles refused, he went away, drawing his blanket high over his shoulders. It was wont to lie loosely about him, to show his badges of captaincy and alliance.

This was about the time that the Indians were making ready for the buffalo, and when their chief took to his lodge, and refused to leave it, they came to ask him why. And they were told. They were for making trouble, but the old chief said the quarrel was his own: he would settle it in his own way. He would not go to the hunt. Konto, he said, should take his place; and when his braves came back there should be great feasting, for then the matter would be ended.

Half the course of the moon and more, and Athabasca came out of his lodge—the first time in the sunlight since the day of his disgrace. He and his daughter sat silent at the door. There had been no word between Fyles and Athabasca, no word between Mitawawa and Fyles.

The Fort was well-nigh tenantless, for the half-breeds also had gone after buffalo, and only the trader, a clerk, and a half-breed cook were left.

Mitawawa gave a little cry of impatience: she had held her peace so long that even her slow Indian nature

could endure no more. "What will my father Athabasca do?" she asked. "With idleness the flesh goes soft, and the iron melts from the arm."

"But when the thoughts are stone, the body is as that of the Mighty Men of the Kimash Hills. When the bow is long drawn, beware the arrow."

"It is no answer," she said: "what will my father do?"

"They were of gold," he answered, "that never grew rusty. My people were full of wonder when they stood before me, and the tribes had envy as they passed. It is a hundred moons and one red midsummer moon since the Great Company put them on my shoulders. They were light to carry, but it was as if I bore an army. No other chief was like me. That is all over. When the tribes pass they will laugh, and my people will scorn me if I do not come out to meet them with the yokes of gold."

"But what will my father do?" she persisted.

"I have had many thoughts, and at night I have called on the Spirits who rule. From the top of the Hill of Graves I have beaten the soft drum, and called, and sung the hymn which wakes the sleeping Spirits: and I know the way."

"What is the way?" Her eyes filled with a kind of fear or trouble, and many times they shifted from the Fort to her father, and back again. The chief was silent. Then anger leaped into her face.

"Why does my father fear to speak to his child?" she said. "I will speak plain. I love the man: but I love my father also."

She stood up, and drew her blanket about her, one hand clasped proudly on her breast. "I cannot remember my mother; but I remember when I first looked down from my hammock in the pine tree, and saw my father sitting by the fire. It was in the evening like this, but darker, for the pines made great shadows. I cried out, and he came and took me down, and laid me between his knees, and fed me with bits of meat from the pot. He talked much to me, and his voice was finer than any other. There is no one like my father—Konto is nothing: but the voice of the white man, Fyles, had golden words that our braves do not know, and I listened. Konto did a brave thing. Fyles, because he was a great man of the Company, would not fight, and drove him like a dog. Then he made my father as a worm in the eyes of the world. I would give my life for Fyles the trader, but I would give more than my life to wipe out my father's shame, and to show that Konto of the Little Crees is no dog. I have been carried by the hands of the old men of my people, I have ridden the horses of the young men: their shame is my shame."

The eyes of the chief had never lifted from the Fort: nor from his look could you have told that he heard his daughter's words. For a moment he was silent, then a deep fire came into his eyes, and his wide heavy brows drew up so that the frown of anger was gone. At last, as she waited, he arose, put out a hand and touched her forehead.

"Mitawawa has spoken well," he said. "There will be an end. The yokes of gold are mine: an honour given can not be taken away. He has stolen; he is a thief. He would not fight Konto; but I am a chief and he shall

fight me. I am as great as many men—I have carried the golden yokes; we will fight for them. I thought long, for I was afraid my daughter loved the man more than her people: but now I will break him in pieces. Has Mitawawa seen him since the shameful day?"

"He has come to the lodge, but I would not let him in unless he brought the epaulettes. He said he would bring them when Konto was punished. I begged of him as I never begged of my own father, but he was hard as the ironwood tree. I sent him away. Yet there is no tongue like his in the world; he is tall and beautiful, and has the face of a spirit."

From the Fort Fyles watched the two. With a pair of field-glasses he could follow their actions, could almost read their faces. "There'll be a lot of sulking about those epaulettes, Mallory," he said at last, turning to his clerk. "Old Athabasca has a bee in his bonnet."

"Wouldn't it be just as well to give them back, sir?" Mallory had been at Fort Pentecost a long time, and he understood Athabasca and his Indians. He was a solid, slow-thinking old fellow, but he had that wisdom of the north which can turn from dove to serpent and from serpent to lion in the moment.

"Give 'em back, Mallory? I'll see him in Jericho first, unless he goes on his marrow-bones and kicks Konto out of the camp."

"Very well, sir. But I think we'd better keep an eye open."

"Eye open be hanged! If he'd been going to riot he'd have done so before this. Besides, the girl—!"

Mallory looked long and earnestly, at his master whose forehead was glued to the field-glass. His little

eyes moved as if in debate, his slow jaws opened once or twice. At last he said: "I'd give the girl the go-by, Mr. Fyles, if I was you, unless I meant to marry her."

Fyles suddenly swung round. "Keep your place, blast you, Mallory, and keep your morals too. One'd think you were a missionary." Then with a sudden burst of anger: "Damn it all, if my men don't stand by me against a pack of treacherous Indians, I'd better get out."

"Your men will stand by you, sir: no fear. I've served three traders here, and my record is pretty clean, Mr. Fyles. But I'll say it to your face, whether you like it or not, that you're not as good a judge of the Injin as me, or even Duc the cook: and that's as straight as I can say it, Mr. Fyles."

Fyles paced up and down in anger—not speaking; but presently threw up the glass, and looked toward Athabasca's lodge. "They're gone," he said presently; "I'll go and see them tomorrow. The old fool must do what I want, or there'll be ructions."

The moon was high over Fort Pentecost when Athabasca entered the silent yard. The dogs growled, but Indian dogs growl without reason, and no one heeds them. The old chief stood a moment looking at the windows, upon which slush-lights were throwing heavy shadows. He went to Fyles' window: no one was in the room. He went to another; Mallory and Duc were sitting at a table. Mallory had the epaulettes, looking at them and fingering the hooks by which Athabasca had fastened them on. Duc was laughing: he reached over for an epaulette, tossed it up, caught it, and threw it down with a guffaw. Then the door opened and

Athabasca walked in, seized the epaulettes, and went swiftly out again. Just outside the door Mallory clapped a hand on one shoulder, and Duc caught at the epaulettes.

Athabasca struggled wildly. All at once there was a cold white flash, and Duc came huddling to Mallory's feet. For a brief instant Mallory and the Indian fell apart, then Athabasca with a contemptuous fairness tossed his knife away, and ran in on his man. They closed; strained, swayed, became a tangled wrenching mass; and then Mallory was lifted high into the air, and came down with a broken back.

Athabasca picked up the epaulettes, and hurried away, breathing hard, and hugging them to his bare red-stained breast. He had nearly reached the gate when he heard a cry. He did not turn, but a heavy stone caught him high in the shoulders, and he fell on his face and lay clutching the epaulettes in his outstretched hands.

Fyles own hands were yet lifted with the effort of throwing, when he heard the soft rush of footsteps, and someone came swiftly into his embrace. A pair of arms round his shoulders—lips closed with his—something ice-cold and hard touched his neck—he saw a bright flash at his throat.

In the morning Konto found Mitawawa sitting with wild eyes by her father's body. She had fastened the epaulettes on its shoulders. Fyles and his men made a grim triangle of death at the door of the Fort.

THE MEN WHO CLIMBED

By MARJORIE L. C. PICKTHALL

WHAT had taken Stephen Forrester to the Exhibition would be difficult to say. He had told his friends that snow and ice and anything higher than a first floor made him feel ill, and had then proceeded to lose himself very pleasantly among the fleshpots. Well, he had earned his fleshpots. Yet here he was, at three o'clock on a sunny afternoon, paying his entrance fee like anybody else to the Association Rooms, to see Macrae's photographs.

"The large photographs of Mount Forrester are in Room C," said the very efficient young person with the bobbed hair who gave him his change. "Kindly keep to the right." He thanked her humbly and clicked through the turnstile in the wake of a large woman in musquash and carnations, who would probably have given much to know him. For Forrester was something of a lion that winter.

He went into Room C, after a guilty glance about A and B. But no one was there who knew him. No one said: "That's Forrester! Yes, the fellow with the limp. You'd never dream he was fond of that sort of thing, would you?" His first thought was: "Mac did some good work!" Then, with an involuntary catching of the breath, he stopped short before the great photograph that held the end wall alone.

And as he did so he knew with sure foreknowledge that any time in his life he might be brought up with that little thrill, that while he lived, a hundred chance scents or colours or silences would have power to renew for him that air of ineffable space, those sheathed and virgin rocks, those upper snows austere against the burning blue; that the impersonal passion of the climber had been, was, and forever would be the moving force of his soul.

"Mount Forrester from the South-east," the catalogue had it. Just that! He was the man who had conquered Mount Forrester; and he was the man who knew how utterly the great height had conquered him.

He sat down on one of the leather divans placed at intervals down the centre of the room, staring at the enlarged photograph with half-closed eyes. The heated air grew cold in his throat; inside his irreproachable gloves the scars of his old frost-bites burned and tingled; he tapped one well-shod foot—the lame one—on the floor. There in the extreme left-hand corner of the picture was the bit of ice that had slid and crushed him. That had been on the return journey. They said he'd never walk again. Macrae himself had been all in when he took that picture. Why, they'd put him in the tent in the middle of a snow flurry; the cloud had cleared and the light was right; they'd found Mac up to his ears in snow half a mile away, clutching the camera—raving, but he'd taken the picture.

"Excuse me, boss—you done any climbin'?"

Forrester came to earth with a start, and leaned round the curve of the leather seat-back the better to see and answer the man who had so suddenly spoken to

him. But he was slow in answering as the details of the questioner's face presented themselves to him around the curve of the fat green morocco. For what possible interest could such a one have in climbing mountains? An elderly clerk out of work? Scarcely educated enough, judged Forrester. A night watchman? More likely. Anyway, a sub-under-assistant at whatever he set his hand to do. The stamp of the man born to work under other men was on him, on his respectable garments, on his vague face set in graying bristles; one could guess him treading forever the same smoothed rut, running on the same rail, until pushed off at last into a still deeper obscurity. And he was already growing old. Forrester, clean from his heights, was quick to pity. "One of the Great Unlucky," he said to himself; and aloud: "Yes, I've climbed a good bit. Are you—interested in it?"

The stranger smiled slowly. Then he drew out seven coppers and arranged them along his dingy palm. There was a certain youthfulness, a hovering and unexpected sweetness in his smile that attracted Forrester. "These here," he said, "are all I got left o' what Maggie allows me fer baccy this week, after payin' me admission." He returned the coins to his pocket and resumed his slow contemplation of the picture.

For a moment Forrester was in doubt. But the shabby-respectable man was oblivious of him, his whole attention absorbed in the picture. And it was Forrester who renewed the conversation on some impulse of sympathy, saying: "Where have you done your climbing?"

"Me? Oh, anywhere north o' Thunder Valley, for the most part. You *got* to climb there to get about. Don't see no sense in doin' it fer fun." He turned his eyes again to the photograph, and once more that shy, half-boyish smile transfigured his commonplace face. "But you thinks different when yer young eh, Mister? Where you done *your* climbin' if I may arsk?"

Forrester nodded toward the wall. "Thereabouts mostly," he said pleasantly. "My name's Forrester—Stephen Forrester, at your service."

The stranger turned completely around; his face rose over the back of the divan like a queer mild moon. "You—Forrester?" he said with interest. "Well, now! You the feller that climbed that mountain an' had it named fer him?"

"Yes," smiled Forrester, conscious of an excusable glow.

"*My*!" said the unknown softly. "My! If that don't beat all!" He looked at Forrester carefully, as if making a friendly inventory of him. He rubbed his hands gently together. "Maggie'll be *that* amused to hear tell I seen you!" he said shyly.

Well—*amused* was not just the word that Forrester had expected! But the other man came sidling along the leather seat, all alight with interest. He put out his hand, so palpably the hand of a failure, and touched Forrester's sleeve. "Mister," he begged simply, "tell me all about it, so's I can tell Maggie!"

The appeal hit Forrester in his softest place. He was touched. Who was Maggie? He visioned her as beautiful and dreaming of her native hills; in a mental flash

he saw himself telling a moving story to a dozen well-appointed dinner-tables. He said kindly: "Tell me what you want to know. But first—who's Maggie? Where is she?"

"My old girl, Mister. She's washin' dishes at Henniker's till I get a job." He went on with a touch of pride: "She don't have to work when *I'm* doin' anything, boss."

Again Forrester was moved; he guessed that Maggie washed dishes a lot at Henniker's and did it cheerily. Maggie's husband went on with a shy eagerness, jerking his thumb at the wall: "Did you have to cross Somahl' to the glacier, Mister?" "Yes." Forrester was conscious of an increasing astonishment, for the glacier was not shown on the photograph, and is not named on any map. "We climbed that long ridge to the east—the photograph does not show much of it—and worked along till we came to the little plateau. And there we made our last camp. We went up next day. We wanted to do it in a day, so as not to spend a night at that altitude."

"I know." The face of Maggie's husband showed keener, harder; he was touched with some quiet amusement that puzzled Forrester. "You went up roped, boss?"

"As far as that big fissure." Forrester was kindling, as a lyric poet might kindle at the talk of love. "We cast them off then. They were too great a weight. We kept them as dry as we could, but there was a continual *poudre* and they were frozen as stiff as steel rods, crackling as we moved. It sounded so loud, that crackle."

"The papers say you was the only one that made the peak, Mister, the only one that made good."

"It wasn't the other fellows' fault," said Forrester quickly. "They were fine stuff—white men. I tell you they gave up their chances so I should have mine. Yes. They helped me all through, spent their strength for me —so that in the end they'd none left, and I went on alone—on their strength. A man said to me last week: 'You hired them, didn't you?' 'What difference does that make?' I said, 'when they gave me what money couldn't buy?'"

Forrester's eyes went to the picture; he was abruptly silent. Then: "They gave me *that*," he breathed.

After a minute he went on quietly, talking more to himself than to the man beside him:

"I left Mason and Pieters on the last tiny level with the tent over them. Mason was finished. Pieters could have come with me, but daren't leave Mason, who was in a state of collapse, and blue. Pieters never stopped rubbing him, he told me, for an hour. I went on alone, up a slope of hard old snow, steep, but easy enough—that slope—and in five minutes it was as if I'd been alone for centuries from the beginning of the world! I drew myself up on a ledge and looked down. Mason and Pieters were little black figures beneath. Pieters lifted a hand to me. Then I went on over that hummock—there—and they were gone. It seemed to be all right—all right, I mean, that I should be alone at the end—alone with my mountain.

"The hardest part of the climbing was over. There remained only that great soaring wedge of immortal snow, that heaved above me into the blue. I had only to climb, to keep on working upward as long as my strength held. I knew it would not fail. My arms,

outstretched against the face of the steep, and looking as weak as a fly's legs, were yet long enough and strong enough to clasp the whole of that magnificent summit, and leave their mark upon it, and conquer it. What a thing humanity is. Oh, I'm talking nonsense, if you like, but I was a little mad at the time. If you've climbed, you know how it is!"

But Forrester saw at the same moment that his listener didn't know how it was, for all he was smiling indulgently. "I been mad in my time, boss," he said almost with a wink. "I ain't the head for such things now."

Forrester laughed a little. "It took some head," he confessed, nodding at the photograph. "After I worked round that curve there, I had nothing under me but a drop—a drop clear to timber-line. I'd loose a handful of snow from somewhere, and it'd go glittering off into the emptiness behind me like frozen smoke, and I'd stick close for a minute to see if any more was coming. Then I'd watch those bits of snow-dust fall and fall and fall—miles and miles they seemed to fall, right to the black furriness that was the forest of the lower slopes. They came near to shaking me. And now and then I seemed to have nothing at all under hands or feet—to be just afloat in dizzy space. Then I'd look up, and the whole weight of the summit'd rush back at me—hang over me until I seemed to be underneath it and crushed flat. And then I'd kind of come back to myself, and know what I was doing. And I tell you I wouldn't have swapped places with a millionaire! It's at times like that a man feels his soul alive in him and knows he can't fail, whatever seems to happen. They say that morally

we only use about one-tenth of our power of living. It takes the divine moment to teach us what we are when we use ten-tenths—what we are!"

Forrester was frankly smiling now, frankly talking to himself. Maggie's husband was listening in respectful bewilderment, yet with something held in reserve; he sat with his elbows on his knees and his hands dangling forward. Forrester wished he wouldn't; somehow, those hands looked so inept, so apologetic. He went on abruptly:

"I was corkscrewing upwards, if you see what I mean. I calculated to reach the top on the side opposite to where I'd left my two men, for we'd seen that the overhang was less there. But on that side the wind was worse. It was not strong—just a steady swim of cold air fit to freeze the breath inside you.

"I was working up very safely and steadily, finding everything much easier than I had expected, which is often the way. I was cutting steps in solid snow. Nothing could happen to me as long as I kept on cutting steps. I was as safe as a house, for all the next stopping place was two thousand feet under. And I was just thinking so when the thong with which my ice-axe was looped round my wrist caught against a snag that thrust through the snow-crust, and snapped. I shifted my grip on the shaft for greater security; and the next instant the thing was out of my hand and glissading down the slope.

"Well, it was awkward enough, but not fatal. I went on without it, though slower; making detours round hummocks I'd have cut into, and scooping holds with the big knife I had on a lanyard round my neck. I went

on so for maybe another hour, not thinking of the top, pinning my mind to every inch of the ascent.

"And then—all in a moment, as it seemed—I looked up. And there was the summit not two hundred feet above me, and easy all the way.

"Well, I hung on with toes and fingers and tried to cheer, but I couldn't get it out. Change places with a millionaire! I wouldn't have changed places with the kings of the earth! And then I looked more closely at what lay in front of me. And—the cheer went out of me like the flame out of a candle.

"Immediately over me, and for as far round as I could see, the mountain-top was girdled with a band of rock, a sheer face, too sheer to hold the snow. It was all veined with ice, pitted and porous with the weather since the world began—soft stuff, crumbling under frost and sun. Yes, there was just about twenty feet of it. After that a smooth mound of snow to the very crest. And I lay with my chin in a drift at the foot of it, and cried like a baby. For I knew that no power on earth could get me up that little twenty-foot wall of rock without an axe to chip holds with.

"I worked up to it and stood against it. There was a ledge that held me comfortably. I stood on it and drove in the knife as far as I could reach above my head, tossed my line round it and pulled. It came away in a tinkle of tiny ice-chips and rotten rock. I stared below me. I wondered how long it would take me to get down —without having reached the top. I looked to my right, just to make certain of what I was deadly sure of already —that there wasn't any possible way up for a single climber farther along the ledge. And there, as sure as

I'm a living man, were little steps cut roughly in the rock—choked with ice, but recognizable, serviceable.

"When I told our president that," said Forrester after a silence, "he told *me* I'd gone light-headed from exposure."

Forrester gazed at the picture a moment, a smile on his fine vivid face. His eyes looked into a great distance; and the eyes of the man beside him rested on him—kindly, uncomprehendingly, a little wistfully, as if he were trying to follow Forrester into that shining distance.

"I knew." Forrester was speaking to his own soul. "Oh, I knew," he repeated, softly. "I met him there. I felt him there—my nameless forerunner! There was a high spirit near me in the very wind. I touched hands with an unknown comrade, a friend who'd climbed higher leaving his glory to me like a coat for which he'd no more use. How high he must have climbed! To the very stars!

"The steps were very much weathered. They looked very old. They were filled, as I said, with old ice, which I chipped out with the hook of my knife. I went up hand over hand.

"The rest was easy. I won't trouble you with it. I stood on the summit at last, and left the tiny flag there that I'd carried up. He—my forerunner—seemed to be waiting for me there; I fancied that he gave me a generous smile. I knew he didn't grudge me anything. It sounds rubbish *here*, eh? but *there* I smiled back at him—the man in whose steps I'd climbed to the best thing life's given me yet; and I drank his health in the last of my brandy. Then I—came down."

The pleasant, vigorous voice died to silence. Both men, so contrasted, sat silent for a while, looking at the picture, which even in the electric light seemed to glow and recede into some splendid atmosphere of its own.

At last Forrester turned, a little shamefaced; he felt that in talking so to a man who couldn't possibly understand, he'd gone very near to making a fool of himself and his mountain. There was honest pity in his heart for any man who knew nothing of such austere triumphs as he enjoyed; perhaps there was a shade of contempt, too, as he said hastily: "See here, I've made you listen to a lot of stuff, eh? But you must let me pay for this, you know. Just the price of admission—between two men who have something in common."

He broke off. For he was not heard. The shabby man was gazing at the photograph. And as he gazed he chuckled quietly and rubbed his faded knees. "If you'd looked, Mister," he said, "if you'd looked, maybe you'd have found the bits of an oi' lantern, up there where you left the flag!"

Perfectly motionless, Forrester waited.

The shabby man turned to him genially. "Such fools as we are when we're young!" he said. "How it all comes back!" He smiled upon the younger man again with that bright, gentle look which gave him momentarily the aspect of youth; it was like a light reflected from some mountain-peak of the soul. He went on: "Maggie'll be *that* interested when she hears some one has set right alongside me, talkin'—excuse me, boss—like man to man, some one that's been up that there mountain!"

Still Forrester waited, dry-mouthed.

"You see, Mister, me and Maggie, we always counted that there old mountain as ours like, seein' as I was the only feller'd ever been up it in them days. And a fine fool I was. Many's the time Maggie's said to me: 'I wonder I took you, Si,' she's said, 'seein' you showed me what kind of a fool you was when you was courtin'.' Maggie's a great one for a joke. 'Or maybe,' she says, 'I took you just because you was such a fool that Christmas. There's no accountin' for a woman's taste,' she says."

That reflection of a far light rosed his colourless face as he turned again to Forrester; it lighted a pleasant blue star in his homely eyes; he laughed consciously, and glanced down at his patched shoes.

"We wasn't married then," he explained confidentially. "It's a long time ago. Seems queer that there ever *was* a time when Maggie and me wasn't married; but there was." He wrinkled his brow with a ruminative air. "But there wasn't never at no time, any other girl than Maggie Delane for me." He looked gently at Forrester. "You should 'a' seen her then," he said; "she was the purtiest girl in Cascapedia, my Maggie was.

"There was a lot of fellers after her. She could 'a' done lots better, but—she stuck to me. Seems like I didn't have much luck, even then. I dunno why—I was always willin' to work. It just happened that way, Mister. Times I said to her: 'You'd best quit me, honey, and take up with a luckier man.' I said that not knowin' just what I'd do if she done it. But she—she just put her hands on my shoulders,"—he glanced wonderingly at his shabby coat,—"she put her hands there, an' she says: 'Good luck or bad, I'll never go back on you, Si.' "

His slow eyes went back to Forrester's face. "You know how it is with them, with the good ones, boss, when they're—fond of a feller."

"No," said Forrester, after a short silence, and very humbly, "no, I don't know—yet. Go on, please. Tell me the rest."

"We was to have been married that Christmas. But I didn't have no luck. I didn't have enough saved. It near broke my heart. I hadn't got so kinder used to waitin' on things then, and I was just set on goin' to Cascapedia and claimin' my girl that Christmas. She was workin' in a store there, and I was on a lumberin' job back on the Oucouagan. 'Twasn't so far asunders, but the hills riz up to heaven in betwixt us. I hadn't seen her in a long while, Mister. And when the time come on, an' I'd no luck an' had been sick, an' dassent to quit my job, I tramped them hills all one night, boss, tryin' to find the nerve to write Maggie and say: 'We can't be married this Christmas after all, honey; we'll have to wait for the spring.' "

He bent down and picked a thread carefully from his frayed trousers. Raising his head, he stared again at the picture. "I wrote it at last," he went on in his heavy way, "an' I sent it to her. I was down an' out. I—kinder lost my self-respeck, boss, havin' to write that way to Maggie when she could 'a' done so much better . . . Yes sir. An' then her answer came. She wasn't a very good writer. She just said I wasn't to worry; she guessed she could get along without me till the spring—always one for a joke, was Maggie!—but I was to think of her on Christmas."

The shabby man's voice trailed off into silence. After a moment he said, thoughtfully: "Queer how they —the good ones—can break a feller all up an' put him on his feet at the same time, ain't it, boss?"

"I—don't know," said Forrester, softly. "Go on, please."

"She said I was to think of her on Christmas. Somethin' you said awhile back put me in mind of how I felt then. Think of her! Why, I—I felt as though I could chop the mountains down same as if they was trees to get her! I felt there was nothin'—just nothin'—I couldn't do, or bear, or get, so as Maggie didn't quit me. I felt I'd get her them great shiny stars fer buttons to her Sunday dress if she was wantin' them. Made me feel twelve foot high and drunk, she did, just with three lines o' bad spellin' and a joke! I'd five dollars in me pocket, an' I went an' looked up a Siwash, one o' them mountain Injuns that looks like a Chinaman and moves up or down like a goat; I'd done him a kindness a little while back, an' he was grateful, which is more'n white fellers always is. I said, would he take a letter to my *klootch* in Cascapedia, for five dollars, she to get it on Christmas? Yes, he said, he would. I gave him the letter an' the bill, an' off he went—not that she was rightly my *klootch* then, o' course, an' she'd 'a' been terrible vexed if she'd known I called her so; but it was near enough fer *him*.

"We wasn't so far apart, as I says—not so many miles on the level, only not a yard of it *was* level; the hills was like a wall between us; but there was one thing we could both see, one thing that was in sight from

Cascapedia an' from the Oucouagan on the other side. An' that was that mountain there."

He looked at the picture with lingering surprise. "My!" he said, "You wouldn't never think I'd been up there, would you? You'd think I was too old and had too much sense. But I was young then; and some way Maggie'd made me clean crazy."

He flushed and gave Forrester a shy, friendly smile. "Two nights," he said, laughing a little, "two nights I sat up, fixin' a lantern to suit me—fixin' it so's no draft could get in, puttin' in extry wicks an' more oil an' the dear knows what-all! I'd said to Maggie in my letter I'd sent, 'You borrer a pair of glasses if it ain't clear,' I says, 'an' you look at the top o' the biggest mountain you see in betwixt us,' I says 'on Christmas night, an' you'll see if I'm thinkin' of you or not, Maggie Delane.' That's what I says.

"When the lantern was fixed, I packed it on me back keerful, an' I borrerred an ice-ax, an' a pair o' creepers, an' I climbed that there mountain an' left the lighted lantern on the top."

Forrester stared at him. Did he know what he was saying, what, in that brief day of glory given him by a girl's trust, he had done? No, he had no inkling of it; no shadow of a suspicion crossed his simple mind that he had achieved a feat that no man had been able to repeat for thirty years. He was smiling pleasantly, indulgently, at the folly of his youth. And Forrester said, not knowing he spoke aloud: "It's better it should be like that. It's more beautiful so."

"Did you speak, Mister?"

"No—nothing. Please go on."

But the charm was broken; the reflection of that far light was fading from the aging face as Forrester had seen the reflected glory of his peak fading from the lowlands. The shabby man's shyness was increasing; he looked at Forrester uneasily. "I dunno what made me talk so much," he mumbled apologetically. "Seein' that picture an' all, I guess. I ain't generally one to talk much."

"Good heavens, man," cried Forrester, "don't you know you've just been telling me the most beautiful thing I ever heard?" He checked himself abruptly at the look in his companion's face. "Tell me how you got up," he went on more quietly.

But the present had again usurped the splendid past. "I don't rightly remember now," said the shabby man uncertainly. "My mind was that full of Maggie, anyways . . . I crossed the glacier below where you did, an' then I—I guess, I just went up, boss."

"Yes," agreed Forrester, "you just went up . . . And the lantern wasn't hurt, and Maggie saw the light from Cascapedia?"

"She saw it boss. It burned till the oil give out. 'Twasn't hurt a mite."

Forrester looked again at the photograph. He visioned his great peak, a shadow against the winter stars, crowned with a tiniest point of light—a weak star that invaded those awful solitudes, those dominions of wind and cloud, dawn and darkness, to tell a girl in a store that her man hadn't forgotten her! He roused from his vision to see Maggie's husband on his feet, to hear him mumbling good-bye.

". . . be terribly amused to hear I seen you," he heard. "Take it as a favour, boss, if you'd not mention it to no one . . . do a steady man no good. They'd think I was drunk."

Forrester got up and shook hands, which seemed to abash the man very much.

"It's better that way too," he said abruptly, "though you won't have the least idea what I mean. If I can ever have the honour of doing anything for you or Maggie let me know."

The shabby man was gone. An official in blue and silver buttons was staring suspiciously at Forrester. He scowled at the official, and went and stood in front of the great photograph. He stood there so long that the official gave up watching him and moved away. The room was empty. Forrester glanced around; then he took out his fountain pen.

He looked again at the picture of the peak. "Not mine," he said under his breath, and humbly, "not mine!" There was a large ticket attached to the frame, bearing the legend: "Mount Forrester from the South-east." He crossed out the word "Forrester", and above the erasure, in neat black letters, he wrote the words: "Maggie Delane". Then he, too, went away.

A GENTLEMAN IN FEATHERS

By CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS

I

THE tide was out, and the miles on miles of naked red mud flats shone like burnished copper beneath the flaming sunset. Along high-water mark, as far as the eye could see, ran an interminable line of dyke, fencing from the fury of the spring tides the vast pallid expanse of the marshes just filming with the light green of early spring. At one point the rampart of the dyke, following a crook in the low coastline, thrust the blunt apex of a spacious angle far out into the sheen of the mud-flats. In this corner, partly hidden by a tangle of dry brown mullein stalks, crouched a man with a gun, peering out across the flats and scanning the sky towards the southwest. Behind him, dotting the well-drained marsh with patches of shimmering light, stretched a chain of shallow, sedgy meres. In the centre of the nearest one a tall blue heron, motionless as if painted on a Japanese screen, stood watching and waiting to spear some unwary frog.

Steve Barron, owner of the little farm on the uplands half a mile back, and of the section of marsh between his farm and the dyke, was lying in wait for the evening flight of the sea-ducks, who were accustomed to feed far out on the tides by day and fly in to rest at night on the

sedgy meres. He was also not without hope of bagging a brant or a goose. For this was the season of the Northward Flight. That most noble and splendid of game-birds, the great Canada goose, was now winging up from his winter feeding grounds in the rank subtropical lagoons around the Gulf of Mexico to his desolate nesting-places among the uncharted, swampy lakes of the lone north. Last night, lying awake in his bed, Steve Barron had listened, with the thrill which that mysterious sound never failed to give him, to the faint, sonorous, pulsing voices, as flock after flock winnowed high overhead through the dark. In his imagination, in

That inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude,

he pictured them, in slender V-shaped array, driving their sure way straight north on tireless wings, high up in the vaulted night. Far off he would catch, first, a scarcely audible sound,—*honka-honk* wavering and dying away; then swiftly growing louder on the stillness, till passing overhead it became a loud and hollow, indescribably musical throbbing of *honka-honka-honka-honka-honka*,—each swift throb a wing-beat,—and in swift diminuendo died away again into the viewless distance, leaving a silence strangely poignant until, after a waiting that stretched the ear, the approach of another flock was heralded.

Steve Barron's heart went out to those high-journeying voices, and journeyed with them. But being a lover of all the wild kindreds and an ardent student of their ways, he knew that not always did those migrant flocks do their travelling by night. Each flock, he knew, was

guided and ruled by the wise old gander who cleft the air at the apex of the V. Sometimes, to break the long, long voyage and to rest the weaker members of the flock, he would decree a halt of a day and a night, or longer if advisable, at some secluded water on the way. Steve Barron knew that occasionally a flock had been known to stoop to that chain of sedgy pools that lay behind the angles of the dyke, out in the naked solitude of the marshes. Being woodsman and hunter as well as farmer, he had the quaint inconsistency of many of the finest hunters, who love the creatures whom they love to kill. He was eager to shoot one of these beautiful and wary travellers.

On this particular evening, whilst the sunset was flaring red across the coppery gleam of the flats, earth, sky and the far-off sea looked all equally empty of life. Not even the lightest breeze stirred the brown mullein-tops about Steve Barron's hiding-place.

There being no immediate need of caution, Steve Barron stretched his legs, filled his pipe, and settled himself for a smoke. But soon, as the sun sank below the horizon, and the blaze of rose and orange faded down, the spacious solitude began to come to life. Far up in the paling zenith a solitary duck winged inland. A little lower two foraging night-hawks swooped, with a long, musical, twanging note as of a smitten harpstring. A flock of tiny sandpipers flickered up the mud-flats, whirled, with a sudden flash of white breasts, as they approached the dyke, and settled into invisibility a couple of hundred yards away. Steve Barron reluctantly put away his pipe and drew closer into his screen.

Then five slim "yellow-legs", who had been feeding on the mud along the lip of the receding tide, came flying homeward. They flew low, rose at the dyke, and passed straight over Barron's head, but never noticed him because he lay so still. Had he moved so much as a finger their keen bright eyes would have detected him, and they would have whirled off in alarm. But they sailed down close to the surface of one of the pools, dropped their long legs which had been stretched out behind them, hung poised for a second on arched, motionless wings, and alighted where the water was about an inch or so deep. Here they ran about, and piped to one another mellowly, happy and secure. Steve Barron was well content to leave them so. He was after bigger game than yellow-legs. And he knew that the sight of these wary birds feeding undisturbed would be a sign to all other eyes that there was no danger near.

Next there came into view two big ducks,—"whistlers", as Barron's practical eyes made them out to be,—flying high and straight and at tremendous speed. These were worthy game; and Steve slipped the gun to his shoulder, stealthily. The ducks were heading to pass over a little to the left to his hiding-place,—a fair shot, though a long one. He was just about to fire when his finger stiffened ere it pressed the trigger. His keen ears had caught, faint and elusive on the still evening air that far-off *honka-honka-honka* of the great geese. A loud, urgent whistling of sturdy wings thrilled him for a moment, and the two ducks sped by, unsuspecting, and settled, with a sharp splash, on one of the farther and deeper pools.

Steve Barron drew a breath of relief because he had checked himself in time. A moment later the geese came into view,—a thin, black *V*, one leg as long again as the other, heading straight for the point of the dyke. They were flying high; but presently they started downwards on a long slant and with a throb of exaltation he realized that they were planning to alight on one of the deep pools half a mile behind him. His chance had come, and his nerves steadied. The wild pulsing music of that *honka-honka-honka-honka-honka* swept near and grew louder with the swiftness of a lightning express. The muzzle of Barron's long duck-gun covered the apex of the *V* and followed it up, as he waited for the flock to come within range.

But much as Barron knew of the wild creatures, he did not know the expert wariness, the amazing keenness of vision, of the experienced gander who led that flock and had guided it through many perils. That wise bird was not unduly impressed by the sight of the bunch of yellow-legs feeding placidly in the shallows. He distrusted all sagacity but his own. He had his eye on that patch of dead mullein stalks, as something that *might* conceal a foe. And presently he detected the almost imperceptible movement of Barron's gun. A sharp note of warning came into his cry, and he slanted upwards again abruptly, at the same time swerving off to the right with a leap into redoubled speed. And the whole *V* swung with him in instant response, each bird stretching its long neck to a bar of steel under the sudden fierce urge.

Barron snapped an oath of disappointment and, though the range was hopeless, discharged both barrels

in swiftest succession. He had not allowed for the sudden change of speed in his quarry; and so it was more by good luck than good shooting that one heavy pellet found its mark. It caught the hindermost bird of the flock, a young, unmated gander, in the wing. He shot far forwards with the tremendous impetus of his flight, turned over and over, and pitched, with a mighty splash, into the centre of the nearest pool. The yellow-legs scattered off with shrill pipings of alarm; and the two ducks on the pool half a mile away, flapped up, squawking indignantly, and flew off to safer waters.

With a whoop of triumph Steve Barron dropped his gun and dashed into the pool to secure his prize. This pool was nowhere more than a foot deep,—in most parts not more than two or three inches. The wounded bird could not escape by diving. Only here and there could he swim; and at running he was no adept in any case. Overtaken in half a minute he turned valiantly at bay. With harsh, vicious hissing, and savage dartings of his long snaky neck, he jabbed at his adversary's legs,—and his iron-hard bill brought blood, even through the thick homespun trousers, at every twisting snap. At the same time he pounded heavily with his one uninjured wing. But Barron was too elated to care for his bitten legs. This was better luck than he had ever dared to hope for,—a prize indeed to adorn his barn-yard. The more fiercely the splendid bird fought, the better Barron loved him. He grabbed the buffeting wing and held it helpless. He caught the darting neck in a firm but tender grip, just behind the head. He lugged the unsubdued, still struggling captive ashore, held him down between his knees; and, after much difficulty, with both

hands bleeding from savage bites, managed to get him securely bundled up in his coat, knotting the bundle with the coat sleeves and with the stout string which a woodsman always carries in his pocket. Then, having picked up his gun, he tucked the precious bundle under his arm, tail foremost, and set off exultant on the long tramp back to his farm. He had a good reason for carrying his prize tail foremost. He had, of course, been unable to truss up his captive's head; and the outraged bird, undaunted by the ignominious position in which it found itself, was biting vindictively wherever it could reach. But the seat of Steve Barron's trousers was of double thickness, for the sake of durability, and proof against the utmost that furious darting, twisting bill could do. At each indignant assault Barron chuckled appreciatively, thinking how his indomitable captive would lord it over the barn-yard.

II

At first, until his wing was healed, the great gander was kept solitary in a lighted shed, where he could see none of the other denizens of the farm-yard. He was a magnificent specimen of his noble breed, the aristocrats of their race. Taller and of far more graceful lines than other geese, he had a glossy black neck that was swanlike in its length and slenderness. The jet black of his head and bill was set off vividly by a crescent-shaped half collar of pure white under the throat, extending from eye to eye. His back and wings were of a warm greyish brown, each feather edged with a lighter shade. His

breast was grey, fading softly into white on the belly and thighs; while his tail and his strong webbed feet, again, were inky black.

The stately captive soon grew tame enough under his master's feeding and gentle handling, but kept always a severe and dignified aloofness, as far removed from fear as from familiarity. He learned to recognize his name of "Michael", and would condescend to feed from his master's hand; but any attempt to caress him was always rebuffed with a warning hiss, and a flash of his dark, brilliant eyes. At length Steve Barron clipped the long flight-feathers of the wounded wing, turned him out into the barn-yard, and watched with boyish curiosity to see how he would conduct himself.

The moment he realized he was free, Michael spread his wings, took a long run, and flapped mightily, striving to rise into the air, while the ducks quacked and the hens squawked and cackled at the strange intruder upon their peace. But instead of flying, as he expected to do, Michael merely sprang into the air about three feet, and fell over heavily upon his side. It was a blow to both his hopes and his dignity. Swift to learn his lesson he made no second attempt, but stood for a moment staring about him, and then moved slowly towards the puddle of water beside the horse-trough, where the ducks were congregated. The ducks, gabbling excitedly, made way for him with great respect; but the farm-yard cock, a big, pugnacious cross-bred wyandotte, resenting his lofty air, dashed at him furiously. This attack was met with a hiss so loud and strident, so full of menace, that the cock was startled out of his arrogance. He checked his rush abruptly, eyed his intended victim with keen appraisal,

and stalked off to tell his flock that the stranger was not worth bothering about. He flew up on the woodpile, crowed a shrill challenge, and then, seeing that the challenge went unanswered, flew down again and fell to scratching in the litter. Thenceforth he ignored the stranger as completely as the stranger ignored him, and felt quite assured that his honour was satisfied. This little by-play amused Barron, to whom all the creatures on the farm were individuals, and individually interesting.

After guttering in the puddle for a few seconds with his strong black bill, Michael stretched himself to his full height, scanned the sky overhead, and gave a long, resonant call of *honka-honka-honka-honka-honka-honka-honk*. Then he listened intently, as if expecting an answer out of the blue.

In a second or two an answer came; but not such a one as he expected, and neither did it come from the sky. From behind the cow-shed at the further end of the farm-yard, waddling hurriedly, appeared a big white gander, followed by three geese, two of whom were pied grey-and-white, while the third was clear grey, and somewhat slenderer in build than her companions. In that long call of Michael's, for all its strangeness and its wildness, the white gander had recognized something of kinship, and at the same time something of challenge to his supremacy. When he saw the tall, dark form of the stranger, erect and watchful beside the watering-trough, he gave vent to a harsh scream of defiance and rushed forwards, with uplifted wings and with open bill, to chase the intruder from his premises.

Recognizing the white gander as, in a way, one of his kind, Michael eyed him, for a second or two, with an interest that was inclined to be friendly. Then, seeing that the gander was anything but friendly, anger surged up in his lonely heart. Lowering his long, black, snake-like neck, stretching it out parallel with the ground, and waving it from side to side with a peculiarly menacing movement, he hissed like a whole nestful of copperheads and advanced to meet the unprovoked attack.

The two great birds came together with a thud, amid a storm of wild hissings and a desperate buffeting of wings. The white gander had somewhat the advantage in more weight, but he had none of Michael's lightning swiftness, and his strength was no match for the corded and seasoned muscles opposed to him. In a duel with one of his own tribe Michael would have fought warily, sparring for an advantage before coming to grips. But in this encounter he had been rushed, and the fight was at close quarters on the instant. Before he had time to realize his mistake the white gander was hopelessly beaten. Seizing him by the upper wing-joint Michael shook him off his balance, bore him over on his back, trod him down and smothered him with wing-strokes, and then grabbed him, like a bulldog, by the throat, to settle the matter once for all.

But at this moment, just in time to save the white gander's life, Steve Barron sprang to the rescue. He dragged the furious Michael off,—getting well bitten in the process,—and hurled him aside. Then he snatched up the bedraggled and choking gander, and deposited him in the shed from which his conqueror had so lately been released. Michael shook himself vigorously, gave

utterance to a single ringing *honka-honk* of triumph, and proceeded calmly to preen his feathers, which had been ruffled less by the fight than by Steve Barron's rude interference.

What specially concerned Barron now was the attitude which the victorious Michael would take towards the three geese. He had heard, or read, somewhere, that the wild goose, unlike his domesticated cousin, was rigidly monogamous. He hoped it was not so, for he wanted to establish Michael in the dethroned white gander's place, as lord of the harem, and rear a new breed of geese that should eclipse anything in all the country-side. But he must wait and learn Michael's intentions before sending the white gander into exile.

Presently the two pied geese, regarding the dark and stately conqueror with high approval, came waddling up to make his acquaintance and tell him how wonderful he was. This they did by ducking their heads with a queer little jerky movement, unmistakably conciliatory. The grey goose followed them with head erect, curious but indifferent. She had been the favourite of the white gander, and though she certainly admired his vanquisher she had a high opinion of her own value.

As the geese approached, Michael drew himself to his full height and regarded them intently. They did not please him at all. They were too much like his late antagonist. But they were females, so his breeding forbade him to attack them. He turned, and stalked away haughtily. The two pied geese followed, still ducking their heads and gabbling softly in their throats. The grey, on the other hand, stopped abruptly, and cocked her head to examine the sky, as if interested in

nothing but the weather prospects. Then she strolled across to the other side of the farm-yard and fell to feeding on a patch of tender young grass.

Half around the yard moved, slowly and solemnly, the procession of Michael and the two pied geese,—Michael with lofty head in air, pointedly unconscious of the pursuit, his enamoured followers waddling and bobbing hopefully a couple of yards behind his arrogant tail. They passed close by Steve Barron, who stifled his laughter lest he should disturb the drama. They passed the grey goose, who went on feeding with apparent unconcern,—and who, perhaps on that very account, attracted a piercing glance of interest from Michael's haughty eye. Then the two wooers, gaining confidence, closed up. His patience and his politeness alike exhausted, Michael turned sharply and ran at them with a hiss of indignant protest. His unwelcome pursuers, suddenly alarmed, scurried away; and Michael found himself beside the grey goose, who ignored him and went on feeding. But Barron noticed that she merely went through the form of feeding, biting at the grass and letting it drop from her bill.

Now the wanderer from the south was unmated, and very lonely. The grey goose, though so unlike the females of his own race, was graceful and attractive. He desired her. Ducking his proud head he stepped close to her side, murmuring musically in his throat, and pretended to pick a morsel of the grass just where she was biting at it. The grey goose was flattered. She had noted with complaisance the rebuff of her two sisters. Her heart went out to the stately stranger. Her aloofness melted, and she lightly brushed his arched black

neck with her bill. For a few moments the two gabbled together in intimate undertones, and then, having come to an understanding, went off side by side towards the goose-pond, in the meadow behind the barn, the grey goose obviously guiding her new lover.

The two pied geese, seeing that their sister had broken down the splendid stranger's reserve, took heart again and waddled excitedly in pursuit, never doubting that they would be allowed to share his favour. But they were speedily disillusioned. Michael turned upon them with a warning hiss which they could not misunderstand. They wandered back disconsolately towards the horse-trough and lifted their voices in an appeal for their vanquished lord. The white gander answered from his prison. Then Steve Barron let them in to share his safe captivity for the night, that the situation might have time to settle down in its new adjustment. When he let them out, the following morning, the white gander, his spirits quite revived, led off at once to the familiar goose-pond. But when he caught sight of Michael and the grey goose, contentedly preening their feathers at the edge of the pond, he accepted the new order with resignation. He conducted his diminished harem to another pond, a couple of hundred yards away. And Steve Barron concluded,—as the event proved rightly,—that there would be no more fighting.

III

Thenceforth the two establishments kept widely apart. Michael was not aggressive, so long as he was allowed to mind his own business; and as for the white gander, he had learned his lesson well. He would run

no risk of a second humiliation. But the grey goose found herself obliged to learn a number of things. Michael was a most devoted and tender lover, but a jealous one; and he insisted on her living up to his ideals. There was no more loafing about the barnyard for her. Michael chose a little rushy point, jutting out into the goose-pond, for their abode; and observing this, Steve Barron gave them a feed-trough close to the water's edge. As a protection against skunks, foxes and other night marauders, the geese were always shut up in a pen in the yard at night; but Barron surmised that any prowler who interfered with Michael's establishment would get a rude surprise.

The domestic geese had a slack habit of dropping their first eggs of the season wherever they happened to be at the critical moment,—whether in the middle of the barn-yard, out in the meadow, or even in the mud of the pond. As their laying time was early morning, Barron saved the eggs by not letting the careless mothers out till after breakfast. But the grey goose was not allowed any such slackness. As soon as Michael perceived that she would presently begin to lay, he persuaded her to arrange a rude nest, of dead rushes and dry grass, in the centre of the reedy point. He helped her to construct it, and he insisted on her laying her first egg in it. After that he had no more trouble with her, for she became as interested in her domestic duties as he was himself. Instincts of her remote wild ancestry awakened within her, and she grew almost as fierce as Michael himself when Steve Barron came, as he did daily, to see how the home on the rushy point was getting on. At first he never got away from his inspection without bitten legs

and buffeted knees. But at length Michael, with his high intelligence, came to recognize that the tall being whom he could neither hurt nor terrify was altogether friendly, however unwelcome, and ceased to greet him with anything worse than a monitory hiss.

When there were six big white eggs in the nest (a mate of Michael's own kind would have laid only four, or possibly five, and these would have been of a creamy buff in colour), the happy grey goose began to sit. Now Michael grew more savage in his guardianship; and Steve Barron, well content, refrained from tormenting the pair with his attentions, only visiting the pond each morning to put fresh feed in the trough. On one of these morning visits he found near the edge of the pond the drowned body of a big weasel. The weasel had made the mistake of thinking the guardian of the nest an ordinary gander. Michael had caught him by the back of the neck, with the tenacity of a bulldog, and held him under water till his many murderous crimes were expiated. Barron sometimes wondered how a fox would fare in a fight with his redoubtable favourite. But, perhaps fortunately for Michael, the foxes of that neighbourhood were too wary to venture so near the farm-yard. They had no mind to invite the vengeance of that omnipotent being, the Man with a Gun.

After about a month of devoted brooding the grey goose led down into the water six particularly sturdy and lively goslings. They were darker in colour than ordinary goslings, and had black bills and feet like their splendid sire. But as they grew up, and their baby down gave place to grown-up feathers, they were more like their mother than their father, except that their tails,

heads and faces were greyish black. They all lacked the broad conspicuous crescent of pure white across the throat which added so much to the distinction of Michael's appearance. Their backs and wings were of a solid dark grey, with none of the rich chocolate colouring of their father. Moreover they all proved to be most sociable and domesticated in their tastes, with a distinct inclination to fraternize with the youngsters of the white gander's rival flock. So it came about that before the end of the summer, when they were nearly full-grown, Michael and the grey goose, quite satisfied with each other's society, chased them away altogether and once more had the goose-pond to themselves. Absorbed in each other, they were not at all troubled that the white gander now led their own offspring in his train. All they demanded was that the garrulous flock should give a wide berth to the goose-pond.

At last came autumn, and the time of the Southward Flight. With the autumn moult, of course, Michael renewed the flight feathers of his clipped wing. Steve Barron purposely refrained from clipping them again, because, being a naturalist at heart, he wanted to find out what Michael would do. Which would triumph in that wild heart, the call of his kind and the migratory urge, or his devotion to his mate?

When the days grew short and grey, and bleak winds swept the little upland farm, and ice, in the crisp mornings, fringed the muddy edges of the goose-pond, and far away across the faded marshes the stormy tides of autumn roared and pounded at the dyke-barrier, then in Michael's heart stirred memories of the warm blue lagoons and sun-steeped reed-beds of the south. When

the first southward-bound flock of his kindred passed high overhead, and their hollow honking throbbed downward to his ears, Michael stretched himself erect, with waving wings, and answered the alluring voices with a long cry of *honka-honka-honka-honka*, repeating it at brief intervals till the journeying *V* was out of sight and hearing. The grey goose, not understanding at all, but vaguely apprehensive, cocked her eyes skyward, and then added her own shrill clamour to her mate's sonorous appeal.

When all was quiet again Michael gabbled to her anxiously, striving to fire her blood with his own restlessness. But in vain. The grey goose would do anything in her power to please him, but she could not help being content with her well-loved home. In her heart she felt no urge to wandering, in her unpractised wings no power of prolonged flight. But she did her best to be sympathetic, flapping her wings and clamouring to the skies whenever Michael indulged in that incomprehensible exercise. And from this Michael, not unnaturally, concluded that she, too, was longing for the south and ready to go with him. He could not conceive of any obstacle to the fulfillment of his dreams. They would spend a carefree winter on the palm-fringed lagoons and wild-rice beds and then, of course,—since all the geese, wild and tame alike, are home-lovers,—return with spring to their old nest beside the goose-pond.

It was not, however, until after several days of this restlessness and longing that the flight-fever in Michael's veins reached the point when it could no longer be resisted. It was a bright, sharp morning, with that edge to the air which spurs the spirit to adventure. Over the

wooded ridge behind the farm appeared a long *V* of migrants, flying rather low and filling the sky with their poignant music. Michael sent forth one joyous *honka-honka*, to tell them he was coming, took a sharp run with wings flapping violently, sprang into the air, and went beating upwards on a long slant calculated to join the flock at a point perhaps half a mile or more away, far out over the marshes. He never doubted that his faithful mate would follow him.

This, indeed, after a moment of agonized hesitation, she did, but only by a desperate effort. Michael, glancing back to assure himself, saw her flapping valiantly about thirty yards behind him, and sped onward and upward, his heart throbbing with exultation.

The grey goose had never flown more than two or three hundred yards, at the utmost. She had never been more than twenty feet above her familiar green earth. Now, after a few seconds' frantic pursuit of her lord, she found herself winging high above the tops of the tallest fir-trees. She was terrified. But she forgot that terror in a greater one, when she saw that Michael was leaving her far behind. Giving up the vain attempt to mount to his height, she flapped on desperately below him, in a level flight, driving her poor wings, more by will and nerve than muscular strength, to an effort which they were never intended for. She tried to call, hoping that Michael would relent and come back to her. But no sound came from her gaping bill and gasping throat. She was by this time well out over the marshes. At last, her overtaxed muscles would no longer obey her will. Still flapping, but ever more and more feebly, she sank lower and lower, and came down with a loud splash

in the shallows of a marshy pool. For perhaps half a dozen seconds she sat there dazed. Then, finding her voice again, she screamed beneath the loved form that flew so far and high above her.

Michael was by this time very near the flock. But through the whistling of his wings that scream reached his ear. He looked back. His strong flight slackened as he saw that his mate was not following him. He looked down, far down,—and descried her staggering and flapping painfully over the harsh stubble of the marsh. Just for two or three wing-beats he hesitated, staring wistfully after the flock. Then, with their joyous music ringing through every fibre, he turned aside, and sank down in wide spirals from his free heights and coloured dreams to rejoin his earth-bound mate. As he observed her pitiful exhaustion the realization came to him that the power of flight was not hers, but that she had done her desperate best to follow him. Rather than forsake her he would forget the blue lagoons and the golden-green reed-beds.

Very slowly and painfully, but with happiness in her heart, the grey goose led him back, across the rough marsh and up the rocky hill, to the dear, familiar pond behind Steve Barron's barn.

THE CURE

By MAZO DE LA ROCHE

HE was washed and combed and scented, and set up in his easy chair by the sunny window —just like an old doll, he thought. Ada, his wife, had been very much like a little girl, washing and dressing her doll, and propping it up in a chair, just under the canary's cage. Very much like a little girl, she had backed away from him to admire the effect, when all was done. She had made him a sprightly little bow, her hands clasped against her breast, her small grey eyes twinkling in that secretive way they had, as though she had just been plotting against him . . . And so she had, often and often, plotted to buy finery for her body; or extravagant gewgaws for the house, like that set of Japanese birds painted on silk; or to give fanciful entertainments, like that Spring fête, when all the old chestnut trees in the garden had been strung with innumerable Chinese lanterns, and the summer-house suffocated in paper flowers, and a band rigged out like Hungarian gypsies. She had provided the costumes, and the whole affair, only one of many, had cost the devil of a lot of money. Why, the old silver punch bowls had never been allowed to be emptied. Even the band had had punch. Good stuff, too. Not like the disgusting fruit punches they gave you nowadays . . .

Well, people had talked a lot about that fête. Twenty-five years ago it took less to amuse people. They'd talk over any fun they'd had for days afterward. Now they'd have forgotten it by the next day. They'd be off after something else. He'd like to see the garden fête that would excite his nephews, Gordon and Fred!

The canary hopped down to the bottom perch and peered at him over the little brass fence that enclosed its cage. It cocked its blond head at him. He hoped it wasn't going to sing, for its noise hurt his head, but before he could stop himself, he had said—"tweet! tweet!" to it, and that was all the encouragement it needed. It burst into a cascade of shrill notes; then it turned to a piercing chatter from which, he thought, it would never desist. He lay back in his chair staring at it. He longed to have the bit of yellow fluff between his fingers. He would tweak its neck for it, by God—squeeze the senseless chatter out of it. Each note seemed like a tiny hammer on his brain. His forehead broke out in a sweat. He raised his voice and called, huskily:

"Ada! Ada!"

At the sound of his voice the canary sang more loudly than ever, completely drowning him out. He sat up and shook his fist at it and cursed it. Convulsed with joy it threw its head back on its ruffled throat and strained every nerve to excel all previous outbursts.

He sank back once more, and shut his eyes. Two tears pressed between the lids and trickled down his cheeks.

He lay quietly now, letting the sharp notes beat upon his brain, beat down his angry thoughts. He felt broken . . . A heavy lorrie rumbled down the street. The

noise of it shook the summer air and rattled the window pane. When it had passed, the canary had ceased singing.

He weakly opened his eyes and looked up at it. It was eating a seed. It dropped the shell to the bottom of the cage and wiped its beak sharply on the perch. Then it hopped to the bottom perch and began to drink. There fell a delicious silence everywhere. Not a sound in the house, on the street. The full rich perfume of chestnut blossoms came in at the open window. He rolled his head towards the sweetness of it, and through the brightness of his tears saw the great tree standing in glory, its white plumes upright like perfumed candles.

Quietness in the street and through the house. Quietness now in his own spirit. He would soon be himself again if only the damned bird would let him be. It was an awful thing for a man to have a wife—to have been tied up to her for thirty-five years—who always wanted a canary singing or a music box jigging in the house.

There she was coming now, up the stairs. Always that same tripping, high-heeled walk. Walk the same if her back was breaking. Great old girl, Ada. Lively for her age. Showed her clothes off. A good looker.

He tried to look even weaker than he was as she came into the room. He let his chin sink into his breast, his hands lie feebly on the arms of the chair. She had been humming a little, in forced gaiety as she came into the room, but when she saw the sunlight playing over his bowed head, and the way the silky white hair that curled like a child's, was gently stirred by the breeze, she hesitated, a look of mingled anxiety and compassion softening her features.

"Was he sleeping, then?" she asked, in a cooing voice.

"Hm—might ha' been if the damn canary hadn't screeched his head off. Nice bird to leave a helplesh man alone with." It was hard for him to speak distinctly. His tongue was thick and his throat husky.

His wife gave a trill of metallic laughter and made a little dart towards the canary.

"Oh, naughty, naughty, naughty," she said. "Tweenty-weenty! Tweenty-weenty! Did he hurt his dear master's head with him's 'ittle song?"

The canary, recognizing her, began to twitter petulantly. Her black, curled "transformation" made her look top-heavy. Her small grey eyes twinkled in her pale, powdered face.

Dick Boone regarded both her and the bird with equal disfavour.

"The matter with you both is," he said, "that you think too much about yourselvesh. Always prinking and twittering and hopping from one perch to another. That's what'sh the matter with you and the bird, Ada mine."

With a fluttering movement she came from the canary to him, and bent her face towards his, smiling into his eyes.

"And I pleased him once, didn't I?" she breathed. "There wasn't a girl could match Ada, for elegance, for style!"

"Get away," he said, crossly, turning his face away. "Suffocatin' me. I don' wan' to be bothered."

But she pressed closer, her thin lips folded in a smile. One of her long earrings was sharp against his cheek.

The large sleeves of her pale blue silk tea-gown of the period enveloped him. The smell of her powder, and some scent that she always used on her "transformation", made him feel choky and helpless.

"Going to be good?" she whispered, looking commandingly into his eyes.

"Hm—hm," he grunted, playing with her beads.

"And take your egg-nog?"

"Hm—hm."

"And nothing else—now look at me—nothing else, to make you naughty and sick?"

"No—o."

She kissed him briskly and went into the bathroom.

In some ways the bathroom was like the little room behind a small chemist's shop. Phials, measuring glasses, miscellaneous appliances for the sick room and the toilette were everywhere in hopeless disorder. Almost empty bottles, grey with dust, their sticky labels quite illegible, crowded the stained shelves. It was like a small, untidy kitchen, too, for there were a gas ring, several saucepans, several bottles of milk—from the full bottle of morning's milk through sour degrees to the one whose curdled contents was crowned by a miniature forest of fuzzy green mould. Boxes of biscuits, cartons of eggs, tins of "foods", glasses of jelly overflowed to the top of the wicker soiled clothes basket. No servant was ever allowed in here to tidy up. This was Ada Boone's own secret room, where, filled with apprehensions, often sick at heart, though humming gaily so that Dick might not guess it, she administered to his needs in his bad times. And when he was "himself", it was from this room that they emerged in turn, fresh, scented,

combed, shaved, curled, a still dashing, still to-be-stared-after couple. A strange, pathetic, vain, wayward couple, the Boones. Childless, they quarrelled and made it up like children themselves. Though each disliked the other's ways, they were deeply attached, very dependent on each other.

Presently, after the prolonged swishing of an egg-beater, she emerged, carrying an egg-nog.

"Nice 'ittle egg-nog for 'ittle boy," she said.

"Not hungry," he said, turning his head towards the window. "Rather look at the chestnut tree."

"Ah, but he must eat and drink to get well again."

He looked at her now, with a malicious grin.

"Drink?" he repeated.

"Not naughty stuff. Just milk to make him strong."

He took the glass and sipped.

"Pf," he said. "Insipid stuff."

"More sugar? A wee dash of nutmeg?"

He raised his childlike blue eyes imploringly to her face.

"Just a drop of rum, old girl, to take away that sickly taste, give some body to it."

All her softness was gone now. Her eyes struck compellingly into his. She said, harshly:

"Listen. Not one drop. Not if you went on your knees. Don't I know what's good for you? Am I not going to follow the doctor's orders?"

"Very well." He set the glass on the table beside him. "Shan't drink it then, and that'sh flat."

She went into one of her sudden passions. "You dare defy me?" she screamed. "I, who have not had

my proper sleep in a fortnight because of you! You dare defy me!"

"I guessh I'm master in my own house."

She gave a loud, bitter laugh. "A fine master, you are, aren't you? Drinking yourself to death as fast as you can? I'd like to know where we'd be if it weren't for the boys. As loyal to you as if they were your own sons."

"You never gave me a son to go into the business," he sneered.

Her face became crimson.

"No. And I'm thankful I didn't, for he'd certainly have inherited your tastes. A man can't be like you and not affect his children."

Her voice beat him down, but he reiterated sullenly—"Shan't drink the beastly stuff."

"Not drink it? You'll do as I command—I am the major-general. You are the private. I am the Sultana. You are a—a—"

"Eunuch," he suggested, with a feeble laugh.

The canary, inspired by the hubbub, joined his hysteria to hers, rocking on his perch, his throat vibrating with madness.

Beads of sweat stood on Dick Boone's forehead. He reached submissively for the glass. He was broken. It rattled pathetically against his teeth as he gulped the sweet mixture. Seeing him so, Ada's anger melted as a tropical tempest into sunshine.

She took the empty glass from him, patted him encouragingly on the shoulder, and brought him the morning paper. But the egg-nog had not agreed with him. He hiccoughed, and was glad that he did so, since it

showed that all was not well. But she only flitted about the room, smiling at him as she passed, touching the canary's cage into dizzy jigging on its spiral holder.

"Another day or two," she remarked, at last, "and he will be quite himself again. Go down to business like a nice little gentleman."

She was called to the telephone . . . As soon as her loud, animated voice came from below he rose slowly from his chair, steadying himself by its arms, and grunting weakly. He took the empty glass in one hand and shuffled in his leather slippers to the tall old wardrobe. He fumbled with the key, opened the door cautiously, and thrust one hand into the back corner behind the coats, waistcoats and trousers.

He fumbled, and even put his head in among the clothes and peered into the dusk, but the bottle of Scotch he always kept there to be handy was there no longer. He made certain that this was so, then, baffled and resentful, he turned away. Someone had taken the bottle away. Ada, or one of the boys. If Gordon or Fred had done it, they'd hear from him. He'd not stand any damned interference from them. He'd make them eat humble pie! His sister Lizzie's sons daring to interfere with him! Well, Lizzie had been an interfering piece in her day, and her sons took after her.

The canary had put its beak between the wires of its cage to watch his proceedings before the wardrobe. Now it burst into jeering song. He knew it was jeering at him by the way it cocked one beady eye in his direction.

"Stop it, you little devil," he growled. "Whole world's againsht me—even canary."

It ceased its singing but began to utter ear-splitting "tweets!"

"I'll tweet you," he said, savagely, and struck the cage with his hand.

He had only intended to jar it, to vent some of his impotent anger in frightening the bird, but the blow must have been sharper than he knew, for one corner of the bottom of the cage was loosened and, like a golden flash, the canary shot forth, alighting with a wild flutter on the tall head of the bed.

He was horrified, contrite. What had he done? What would Ada say? There was the open window—Oh, dear! oh, dear!

"Pretty—pretty—" he coaxed, shuffling towards it, all his fine white hair standing on end, his delicate, aquiline face, flushed by concern. "Come down to Daddy, then—little rascal." Ada often called them Mammy and Daddy to the bird, and he unconsciously did so now in his anxiety to propitiate and capture it.

But it sped past his groping hand like a comet, floated on outstretched wings a second before the window, then struck itself against the mirror of the dressing-table.

Ada was coming. Humming as she came. He could not bear another scene. He would get into bed.

With sudden agility he clambered on to the high bed, and drew the rose pink satin quilt over him. Only his crest of white hair showed above the edge. He breathed heavily.

Ada entered with a sharp tapping of high-heeled shoes. There was a moment's silence, then she, in turn, exclaimed—"Oh, dear—Oh, dear—" And ran to the

window and closed it. Now there were stealthy movements about the room. Deep sighs of aggravation. Then a "ha!" of blessed relief. She had caught him. He was in the cage.

Deeply, serenely, Dick breathed against the satin quilt. Ada leaned over him and looked into the smooth mask of his face. She drew the quilt down a little so he would get more air, lowered the blind, covered the canary's cage, and tiptoed from the room.

II

When he awoke he felt very much better. He got up without assistance, and, when the gaunt man-servant brought him his lunch, he spoke to him in a clearer, steadier voice than he had been able to produce since the last drinking bout.

He enjoyed his lunch. He had the fellow open the window and went and sat by it, breathing deeply of the warm, ambient air, scented with chestnut blossoms. A hose was playing on the greensward below, and a pair of robins were running in and out of the spray as if they loved it. New life beat in his blood like music. His hand, with its thick veins, that rested on the sunny window sill, was steady.

Ada came in, dressed to go somewhere in a flowered organdie, with enormous sleeves, and trailing skirt. She told him how the canary's cage had come apart, and what a time she had had to catch him without making a noise. She was going out but would not be gone long. She smelled like a flower bed.

He leaned out of the window as she sailed down the walk. She looked up and blew him a kiss. He threw kisses back.

"Romeo, ah, Romeo!" she called.

"Ha, ha, Juliet! Good old girl!"

She was a very emotional woman. Emotions, real or pretended, filled her life. And he had always had the good sense, or the weakness perhaps, to play up to them.

He watched her out of sight. He watched a watering cart lumber heavily by, drawn by two sweating black horses. He was willing to bet they had belonged to an undertaker once. He watched young Mrs. Cowan ride gaily by on her new red bicycle, a small sailor hat topping her golden pompadour. A pretty piece, plump as a partridge.

He began to think about his business. He would telephone the office at once and see how things were going on. He had telephoned several times every day since he had been under the weather, but the boys spoke so indistinctly, there was such a buzzing in the phone, that there was not much satisfaction in it.

He took down the receiver and asked for the office number, that number about which hung an unfailing charm, for he was deeply proud of the wholesale tobacco and cigar business, that had been carried on by the Boones under the same roof for three generations, founded by his grandfather, a well connected Carolinian.

"Main 3344."

He waited with almost pathetic eagerness in the dim hallway, a tousled-haired little man in a maroon dressing-gown.

"Hello," came in Gordon's deep, even tones.

"Oh, hello, Gordon. How's things?"

"Everything's fine. That is, Fred and I are working hard. How are you to-day, Uncle?"

"Oh—h, so, so. Anything new?"

"A big order from Martin Brothers. We don't know whether to fill it or not. I hear they're kind of shaky."

"Don't fill it!" His voice shook with excitement. "D—don't fill it till I look into things. Hear me, Gordon? Don't fill it!"

"All right, Uncle. All right. Just as you say. Good-bye."

"Now mind, Gordon—wait—better send Fred to the phone—tell Fred—?"

But Gordon was gone.

He hung up the receiver and climbed the three steps from the landing, shuffling back to his room . . . The exhilaration of business stirred his blood. Why had that fool Gordon left the telephone so quickly? Those boys were getting above themselves and no mistake. Needed calling down. And they'd get it!

The man brought him a cup of tea.

He felt refreshed by it, and hastened weakly to the telephone again. He cleared his throat and demanded in a firm voice.

"Main 3344."

"Hello." This time it was the stenographer's thin voice.

"Miss Wayling. It's Mr. Boone speaking. Is Mr. Fred Mitchell there?"

"Just a minute, please, Mr. Boone. Mr. Mitchell's in the outer office."

He waited several minutes, then Fred's sharp, nasal voice enquired curtly, "That you, Uncle?"

"Oh, hello Fred? H—how'sh things?"

He had intended to be stern, the heavy uncle, but Fred's hard, crisp tones made him feel suddenly confused. He forgot what he had in mind when he came to the telephone.

"H—how'sh things," he repeated.

"Good as can be expected in times like these. Don't you worry. The new cigar is fine. Got a swell box. Screaming beauty of a Spanish girl on the lid. I'll tell you what you can do. Think up a name for it. We've got to have a striking name. Good-bye."

Before Dick could reply he was gone.

However, he spent the rest of the afternoon quite cheerfully, between playing Patience, and thinking of a name for the new cigar. At last he hit on Adabella, a fine sonorous name, and a compliment to his wife, Adabella, Ada beautiful.

He could hardly wait for her to come home so he could tell her. And when she did come and he told her, she was really charmed. She was especially tender with him that evening, and, when the boys came in after dinner, they were especially nice. All three stood about him, smiling down at him, and looking, somehow, rather anxious about him; Ada in her flowered dress with a dash of rouge on her lips; Gordon with his built out shoulders, and, already, the smug, aggressive look of the successful business man; Fred, sharp as a whip.

It was Fred who came in later, with a small glass in his hand, and approached his chair, smiling.

"I guess a little drink wouldn't do you any harm, to-night, Uncle," he remarked, casually.

Something steely in his voice, penetrating in his cold eyes, arrested Dick's attention.

"When I want a drink, I'll ask for it," he said, sulkily.

Fred showed astonishment, chagrin.

"Well, from what I have heard you wanted one pretty badly to-day," he observed.

Anger flamed into Dick's eyes. So they talked him over among them, did they?

"You can mind your own business," he retorted. I'll not stand any interference from you."

Gordon came in from the hall. He must have been listening, for he said, with nervous cheefulness.

"Well, if you won't have one with Fred, Uncle, have it with me. You've reached the stage where it'll do you good. Brace you up."

Dick turned on the two young men with sudden vehemence. "What's the matter with you two, anyway? What are you trying to do? Make me drink so you can have the run of things a bit longer?" Suspicion crept into his eyes. "Get out. Do you hear? Get out! I won't have it!"

His wife's voice came from the downstairs hall, sharp with anxiety.

"What's the matter, boys?"

He started toward the door to go to her, but Fred laid his hand on his arm, his steely eyes looked into his. He held the glass to his lips.

"Look here, Uncle, you've got to drink it. There's no use objecting."

Gordon was on his other side, gripping his other arm. Still both were smiling. He felt suddenly weak and confused. If they were set on his taking a drink, he'd better do it. He wasn't strong enough to resist those two smiling, staring, bright-eyed nephews. Shaking, he gulped the whiskey down. . . Well, it was good. Nothing wrong about it, but they shouldn't have persisted that way. It wasn't respectful.

The room seemed to float around them, as though they were all under water. Above, the great globes of the gasolier shone like distant moons, through leagues of shimmering, green sea. The two nephews were white faced and goggle-eyed, like strange fish. A booming, as of distant surf, made other sounds indistinct but he faintly heard Gordon say:

"Pretty dopey, what?"

He had his coat on. His silk hat was over one eye. Strange to wear a frock coat and silk hat at the bottom of the sea. Ada was there, too, a long-tailed mermaid. Adabella. She was kissing him. Shedding salt, salt tears. Adabella, Ada mine. . . .

Lights flashed by. Wheels rumbled. He slept.

He had slept for several hours when he opened his eyes, refreshed, but with a sort of buzzing in his ears. There was a soft light in the room, shaded from the bed by a screen. It was several minutes before the shapes of the furniture in the room resolved themselves from unfamiliar shadows, and he perceived that all about him was strange. He turned to look for Ada's head, divested of its "transformation", on the other pillow but it bulged, smooth and white beside him. . . A tremor of fear shook him. He raised himself on his elbow and stared wildly

about the room. It was comfortable, with plain cretonne coverings on the chairs, in perfect neatness, very different from the luxurious disorder that he and Ada loved. He had never seen the room before.

With an exclamation of dismay, he would have sprung from the bed, but at the sound of his movements, a short thick-set man appeared from behind the screen and laid a restraining hand on his arm.

"Just lie down, Mr. Boone," he said, soothingly, in a muffled, heavy voice. "You haven't been very well. Dr. Searle will soon be in to see you."

Dr. Searle! The name struck his brain like a blow, and yet he could not dislodge from the murk of his bewilderment the sinister significance attached to it. . Searle—White—Tom White—his friend, dead now, old Tom had been in Searle's Institute twice. The first time came out "cured", the second, died—after months —or was it years?—of it. Searle's Institute! A cure! He knew what their methods were. Disgusting.

And Ada had let him in for this. The boys he had generously taken into his business—the business of Boone and Son—had done this filthy trick to him—had persuaded Ada it was for the best. A cure! Searle's cure! A month of it would kill him. Kill him! And they'd be glad. Have the business to themselves. The miserable, ungrateful cubs. Lizzie's cubs. She'd been an ungrateful sister and now—her cubs!

The attendant regarded him speculatively. Was the old fellow going to be troublesome?

"Is there anything I can do for you, sir?" he asked "Would you like a cup of cocoa?"

"No, no." His face was a pale mask. No sign in it of the turmoil of his thoughts. "Except my nightshirt. I'd like that. Why am I just in my underclothes?"

"Well, you see, sir, you wasn't very bright when they brought you in, and they thought the less fussing over you the better."

"Good boys," murmured Dick. "Kind, thoughtful boys. My nephews."

"Yes, sir. I'll help you on with your nightshirt now."

The man went to a clothes closet, and Dick had a glimpse of his clothes hanging there, limp and expressionless, like a dead man's clothes.

He was so weak, it appeared, that the attendant had to support him while the nightshirt was put on. He sank back on the pillow with a deep sigh of contentment.

"Let me be now," he muttered. "Want to shleep. Must get lots o' sleep."

The attendant lowered the gas. "If you want me, I'm right in the next room," he said. The only answer was a snuffling snore.

Dick heard him moving about in the next room. He heard footsteps coming along the passage, and another man's voice from the doorway asking:

"What's he like?"

"Quiet as a lamb. Sound asleep. I'm going to have a snooze myself. Goodness knows I need it after the time I had with Mr. Gidding last night. I'm going to make a big kick against all this night duty, you'll see."

III

His heart was hammering against his ribs as it hadn't done since he was a boy up to mischief, as, an hour later, he stood, fully dressed, in the doorway of the next room. It was a small sitting-room with a door leading into the passage. It stood open but when he had tried the outer door of the bedroom he had found it locked. He must pass through this room.

Carrying his top hat in one hand and his shoes in the other, he glided past the sleeping form of the attendant, huddled uncomfortably on a narrow sofa. The passage was dark, save for the moonlight that fell through a grated window at the end, but he could make out the dark cavern of the stairway, and, as he cautiously descended, the thick carpet deadened all sound, and his light weight caused no creaking of the steps. From a room above came a steady, dismal groaning that made his blood freeze. If he hadn't been wide awake, alert, resourceful, he might have stayed there to add his groans to the night.

The hall below was lighted by a gas jet burning under a coloured globe. Through an open double doorway, he saw the dim shape of a dining-table, and the faint glimmer of silver on a sideboard. He entered and examined the three windows. They were large, and locked securely by some patent device he could not discover. A cold sweat of fear bathed his body. Despair was about to seize him when he felt a cool draught on his back, and found that it came from the opening into a serving pantry. He thought:

"If I can only squeeze my body through there, I'm a free man."

Carefully he put his shoes and top hat through first, then, mounting a chair, he placed one knee on the projecting shelf.

"What a blessing, I am small," he thought, "for this hole is not much bigger than a rabbit's burrow."

Strained, bruised, shaking in every limb, he stood, at last, in the serving pantry. A fresh breeze gushed in through the wide open window.

With a sob of joy, he threw his hat and shoes out on to the grass, and clambered after them.

He was safe from that nightmare house! He was free beneath the velvet sky where the warm moon hung like a gilded lamp and the little stars trembled in the treetops.

He sat down on the grass and put on his shoes, fumbling over the lacing of them; he had already put his hat on one side of his head. No one saw him, a dishevelled little man, creep through the side gate into the street.

He paused a moment to cast a look of mingled triumph and abhorrence at the dark shape of the house towering above him, then moved like a shadow down the quiet street towards a small park that surrounded an old church, where he remembered a bench on which he could rest a while and think.

The City Hall clock struck four as he turned into the park. Already there was a faint luminous light in the east. He sank to the bench feeling weak, but filled with an odd exhilaration. He removed his hat and let the sweet air run like caressing fingers through his thick

white hair. He emitted a great "whew" of relief and satisfaction. It was years since he had been out on the street at this hour alone. He recalled some of the nocturnal adventures of his young manhood and grinned audaciously at the dawn. Why, it must have been through this very park, at this hour, forty years ago, that he and that girl in the pink domino had run, with the others in pursuit. What a lovely, long white neck she had had! He thought of Fred and Gordon and their pleasures, and the thought made him sick. Gordon, and his built out shoulders—Fred, with his tight, sallow face. . . He chuckled as he savoured the surprise he had in store for them.

He dozed, and when he opened his eyes it was daylight. Milk carts were rattling down the street, empty street-cars jolting past. He boarded one and rode to the station. In the station restaurant he had a chop and a cup of coffee. In the station barber shop he had a shave, a haircut, and his clothes brushed, remarking to the man that travelling all night made one look very seedy.

From the station, he took a cab to the warehouse. The gilt sign—John Boone and Son—glittered in the morning sunlight. Well, there was life in Son yet—he'd show them. As he passed through the office, there were looks of surprise at his early arrival—perhaps surprise that he should arrive at all—but there were smiles, real smiles of pleasure, and he glowed in return.

Old Parsons, the book-keeper, took his coat and hat, and he sat down behind his desk to await his nephews. While he waited he dozed a little but he was sitting upright when they came in together. Fred was saying:

"Well, I wonder how old 3344 feels this morning. He won't be calling us up anyway. Thank goodness."

"Old 3344 feels very well, thank you," answered Dick, leaning over the desk to glare at them. "Yes, he'll be calling up this office quite often but you won't be here to answer."

"Why, Uncle—" stammered the young men.

"Yes—'Why, Uncle' "—growled their uncle. "You thought you'd put me in a 'Cure', didn't you? Well, it worked faster than you expected. Now, you may put your hats on your swelled heads and go. Never let me see your faces again."

"Oh, Uncle," pleaded Gordon, "I think that for Mother's sake—"

"Yes, I've borne with you for your mother's sake, and I bore with her for her mother's sake. Now, I'm through. Go."

. . . . .

He paid the cabman at his own door, opened the low wrought-iron gate, and walked up the gravelled path, with an almost bridegroom feeling of nervousness and elation. What would Ada be doing? He attached no blame to her in this affair. It was all the nephews' doing.

The chestnut tree held its white plumes towards the sun, the lawn unrolled its dewy greenness, the tones of the largest music-box tinkled from within. It was playing "The Blue Danube".

It did seem a little callous of Ada to have set it going this morning. But, when, panting from the exertion, he reached the door of their bedroom, the sight that met his eyes would have melted any heart. Ada was lying face downward on the bed sobbing bitterly, her

pink silk peignoir rumpled, her "transformation" askew.

"Oh, Dick," she was sobbing, and again—"Oh, Dick,"

He hurried to her and raised her. "It's all right, Ada mine. I'm here. Safe and sound. I'm here—I'm here—"

As she turned towards him with amazement and relief, he added, with his face twisted like a child's that is about to cry—"I'm going to be good, Ada," and sank into her arms.

LABRIE'S WIFE

By DUNCAN CAMPBELL SCOTT

[BEING AN EXCERPT FROM THE MANUSCRIPT JOURNAL OF ARCHIBALD MUIR, CLERK OF THE HONOURABLE THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY, AT NEPIGON HOUSE IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1815.]

May Twenty-second, 1815

O-DAY something happened which is bound to be of consequence in this outlandish place, and that I will set down here and make of record. Alec, who is getting more gumption now, although as unsteady in all his performances as he was ever, returned from his trip to the Flat Rock, and arrived safe with his two canoes and Ogemah-ga-bow, little Needic and his two sons. It appears they had, by reason of the rough weather, to lay by at Dry Beaver Islands and had like to have starved if the wind had not gone down, for these fools of Indians will never learn not to devour half their rations in the first day out from the Post. They came in looking like wasps, their belts girt so tightly about their middles.

I could tell the moment I clapped eyes upon Alec that he had some bee in his bonnet, for he can no more control his countenance than an otter can help fishing. His face was all of a jump, and he spoke as if he had no spittal under his tongue. I have a plan to let the youngster speak when he is ready, and by this means

I have the enjoyment of witnessing him cast about to get me to question him and assist him out with his story. When we were having a bit of dinner he fairly simmered, but he did not boil until I lit my pipe. Then he could stand my coolness no longer.

"We're to have an opposition!" he blurted out. I did not want to show any astonishment, but I nearly dropped my pipe, such a matter never having been thought of in the Nepigon before. "You see," he went on, "I determined when I was at that part of the lake to go over to Keg Island and see if the cache was all right, and on St. Paul's Island, when we went ashore to roast some fish, we found two canoes loaded, and a Frenchman and three Indians."

"He asked me if I was with the English, and I lied to him straight enough, and said No! I was trading alone. Then he wanted to know where our Post was, and I said it was beyond the large island to the west. He said his name was Labrie, and that he was for the North West Company, and was sent in opposition to the English on the lake. So I decided to camp where I was, and not to go to Keg Island, but to come on here. I told him to keep due west, and not to land until he struck the big island, which was Cariboo Island, and not for any reason to camp on a little flat island half way there, which was full of snakes."

The youngster was mighty proud of himself at outwitting the Frenchman, but, to take down his pride a bit, I provoked him by saying, "Well, poor Donald used to call you a clavering idiot, but if he had lived to this day he'd have had to invent a new kind of word for you. If your Labrie is anything of a trader he watched you

away in the morning, and he will treat us in good Hudson's Bay Company rum when we first meet, having visited your little flat island full of snakes." Off went Alec trying to bite his beard, aping Donald's manner, poor lad; but he has yet a beard no longer than a pin-feather.

May Twenty-third, 1815

I was up before sun this day, as I had a restless night, thinking what I should do now we were to have opposition on the lake, a thing new to me who have scant experience. I determined to be smooth with them and observe them closely, and spoil them if I might with a fair face, and in all events to fight them with what weapons they may choose. I had wakened from a light doze with the sudden thought that I should possess myself of the point of land below the Post where I have always said the buildings should have been placed, which commands and oversees our present position. If it were seized by these pirates of Frenchmen, what then would become of our trade? They would eat it like a bear eats honey-comb. Alec could not see that, and provoked me with much grumbling that it was a useless work and a weary waste of muscle. It is curious how blockheaded he is about all matters connected with trade: he has some acuteness belike but of what sort God alone knows. In the end I was mightily satisfied to see a stout staff with the ensign flying, and a small boat-landing, with one of the boats moored. We had the work done before mid-day, and for the rest of the time I had pleasure in looking down at the point which had an inhabited and secure look, under the Hudson's

Bay Company's flag. If the Frenchmen have any idea of the shore about here there will be some *sacréing* when they find the point taken up, for northwards there is no place for a foothold, and only in a cove, half a mile to the south, can they find level land enough for building upon. So when our Indians come down, and they should be here in a matter of four weeks, they are bound to reach the Post first, and I can keep my eye upon the rascals, who would, if they could, trade with the newcomers and forget old kindnesses and obligations.

May Twenty-fourth, 1815

Ogemah-ga-bow came up to say that one of Needic's boys had died last night, having over-eaten himself after his fast on the Dry Beaver Islands. Rain to-day.

May Twenty-sixth, 1815

Sun-down yesterday on my bench before the door, whereby Needic had made a smudge to keep off the flies, which are now very bad, when I saw a canoe that was none of ours land at the point, and a man step out onto the new boat landing. He looked all about him as if he was making an inventory of the place, and then he came slowly up the hill. He was a stout-shouldered, low-set fellow, with a black beard and small, bad eyes. Said I to myself as I saw him approach, "There is something mainly dishonest in your make-up, my man, and whatever one may have to do to keep trade from you it won't be very savoury in the doing if your methods are to be used."

"My name's Labrie," he said, running his hand through his hair.

I got upon my legs and said politely, "I heard of your being in the Lake from my man. Will you be seated?"

He said "No" and looked over his shoulder at the Point.

"You have the Point under your flag," he remarked.

"Aye," I said, as dry as I could.

"The work has marks of newness."

"You are right, it was only finished yesterday."

The blood came into his face in an ugly way.

"Well, there can be no great objection to my trading a little."

"Not there," said I bluntly. "Under my company's flag what we take we claim and keep."

He breathed rather heavily, but held his tongue, and was going to walk away.

"Hold on," said I, "strangers are not treated so here, you must have a dram."

I called Alec, who brought the rum and the glasses. We drank healths courteously, that were ready to cut one another's throats.

"Did you ever taste better than that?" said I.

"I have as good," said he, "though it is the best, I can match it."

"Match it!" said I in a tone of surprise, winking at Alec, who flew as red as a bubble jock. We parted then but just as he was getting away he said over his shoulder, "Your man there has a damned queer idea of direction."

May Twenty-seventh, 1815

Sent Needic and his live boy and Ogemah-ga-bow's brother to Poplar Lodge, to have news of the hunters.

The Osnaburgh packs from the north should now be two weeks out, unless the ice is later this year than last. To-morrow I will put Alec and Ogemah-ga-bow to work clearing out the storehouse and setting things to rights. I am much exercised in mind over my responsibilities. It was bad enough last year, but now I have the whole management, and this opposition to contend with upon the back of it. I begin to be worn with it, what with loss of sleep at night, and thinking about nought else in the day. No sign of Labrie or any of his party.

May Thirtieth, 1815

This morning Labrie came up to borrow an adze, which I lent to him without any question. He seemed to want to be civil enough. When I asked him, however, if Madame Labrie had arrived, he seemed quite put about and mumbled something in his beard, which sounded nearly like "What affair is that of yours?" I paid no attention to him, not wishing to quarrel yet awhile, and without any further parley off he went with the adze, which I am fortunate if I ever see again.

Heat intense to-day, bringing on a great storm of thunder and much rain. Had a great debate with Alec, when we were indoors, as to when the Osnaburgh packs will be in. I calculate in three weeks, as the water is like to be high, they will take the route through Mud Lakes to Negodina, as I wrote Godfrey. The old route to Wabinosh would take them much longer and, what with broken water and two desperate, long carries, there is a great risk of loss by that way. Alec thinks they will be down sooner. There is no doubt they have had a fine winter and if the pack can be safely landed it will

be a great matter, and no doubt I shall hear good of it from the partners.

May Thirty-first, 1815

This morning when I was cleaning my pistols I heard a clear sound of laughter. Now laughter is an uncommon thing in this country, visiting us very infrequently. To be sure the Indians laugh, but that to me always has an unmeaning sound, and sometimes a bestial. Moreover, this laughter was different in kind, and one must have listened to it however absorbed he might have been. It was high-pitched and very clear and had something merry and withal innocent about it. It was contagious also and the mere sound of it made my very muscles twitch. There was no one visible, but after I had gazed awhile I saw Alec come up the steps from the warehouse. Not to appear interested before the lad I went back to my work. After a little he came in. I noticed his face was flushed and his manner excited. I paid no attention to him until he had knocked a dish off the table. It broke into three pieces. I was angry with him, good crockery not being by any means very plentiful in this country.

"Good God, man!" I cried. "If you're in such a state that you cannot avoid breaking the dishes, will you lie upon your bed for a while." He glared at me terribly, but had not a word to say. Then I kept quiet for as much as a quarter of an hour, and I could see it was fretting him; he fidgeted about greatly. Then he got up and went to the door.

"It seems to me you take mighty small interest in things."

I said never a word.

"Are you deaf this morning?"

I made no sound. He made no move for a minute, then he said, just as he was going out of the door, in an exasperated way, "That was Labrie's wife."

I could have laughed to myself, but when I had thought upon it for a time I began to perceive something bitter in his tone, and I reflected that of late I had treated him much as poor Donald used unthinkingly to treat me, and that he must be occupying my old position of complaint, and my heart was softened a bit, and I resolved to be more kind to him in future, who is in much a good boy and canny in a sort about many things.

June First, 1815

I saw Labrie's wife for the first time this morning. An uncommon looking wench, with black hair and eyes and a mouthful of white teeth. I discussed her thoroughly with Alec, who sticks up for it that she is a handsome one. So she is, after her manner, though that I do not acknowledge to Alec. She looked me all over as if I were for sale, and when I coolly turned my back on her, that she might have a good look at that, she went off in a mighty huff.

Alex reports that there are two other women in Labrie's party, rather old and haggish. I have not clapped eyes upon them, not having visited the Cove. Although she went off in a huff, the young wench is a merry one, and it amuses her to hear Alec so aboundingly polite to her with his "Madame Labrie". "Madame Labrie" this and "Madame Labrie" that, whereupon she giggles or breaks out into wild laughter.

June Third, 1815

Needic back from Poplar Lodge, where everything is all right. Had an amusing conversation with the lad Alec anent Labrie's wife. The hussy comes about the house constantly, even when we are not here.

"Now what is she after?" said I.

"You have no understanding of women," he replied. "Of course she will come back when you treat her in that way."

"Now in what way?" said I. "Never do I look at her or pass the time of day with her."

"That is it," he retorts. "You are fairly insulting her, and she comes back."

"Do you try and be sweet to her and mayhap she would stay away."

"It is different with me," he says, biting his whiskers (?) and shrugging up his shoulders, just as the wench does herself. He has taken on a sort of mincing, balancing, half-Frenchified accent, and shrugs his shoulders.

"Are you afrait she would fall into the love weez you, Alec?" I remarked, trying hard to imitate the accent.

"It is not me she will be in love with."

"No, who then? Needic?"

"Needic!" he cried, going off with a great French shrug.

June Fourth, 1815

No word from Godfrey about the packs. I am getting a trifle anxious. Alec says there are more guns than yardsticks in Labrie's quarters, and makes out they are on for a fight. Labrie's wife came up at noon

and made us an omelette with gull's eggs and fresh onion-tops. She is a clever wench and sat looking at me as I devoured it. I talked a bit to her. After she left, Alec sat frowning.

"You were very free with her."

"I merely spoke to her, but then she made a good omelette."

"You said too much to her. You nearly told her we expected the packs at Negodina by the Mud Lake route this year instead of Wabinosh."

"Well, and if I did?"

"It is all she wanted to know."

"Well, you seem to be always ready to stand up for the spy, if she be one," said I, turning the French accent upon him. This made him wroth, as it always does.

"You never seem to understand that a woman's not like a man. The best of them you have to watch, and more particularly when one of them is in love wiht you."

"That does not apply here," I said, "unless you have her assurances yourself."

"I would not make love to a married womn," he said hotly.

"That's why you guard yourself so carefully, is it? You are mighty pious. It is a pity you are not like me. Now for me Mr. Labrie's wife has no attraction whatever, commandments or no commandments."

This set him off again.

"Be careful you, Archibald Muir, that is what I have to say to you."

We could hear the lady herself laughing down at the landing, and it sounded so innocent that I could not refrain from smiling at the boy.

June Fifth, 1815

We had a scene last night with Labrie's wife, for which Alec has to be thanked, and in which I think he had a small revenge for my baiting of him. I will set down the occurrence here although it be against myself, and our national instrument. She had been hardly before the house, and it was in the dusk of the evening, when she asked me to play upon the pipes.

"Will you play upon the bag-pipes, Mr. Muir?" she said in a very civil voice. "I have never heard the bag-pipes."

Now I am always at pains to oblige a lady, if it be possible, so I went in and got the pipes, hearing Alec urge me also, so I had two willing to be pleased.

Well, scarcely had I begun to get the skin filled with wind when Labrie's wife began to laugh. Now I am willing to admit that the foreword to a performance on the pipes may be dispiriting, but I charge that what follows after when the instrument is well controlled, and when the melody pours forth in full cry, would serve to obliterate a greatly more dispiriting prelude. But in this case I did not get beyond that stage, for Labrie's wife laughed with so little judgment that I was put about. I saw something in Alec's face which led me to think that the whole matter was preconceived by him, and with that I laid down my pipes on the bench beside me. Not another note would I play. I am not much versed in women's ways, and what Labrie's wife did puzzled me. But of that I shall give Alec's explanation. At first she kept on laughing, and then she stopped suddenly and came forward looking sober enough, but with the wrinkles of the laughter not yet

gone out of her face. There she stood about four feet from me with a bit of her dress in her hand, as I have seen school girls stand abashed having been found at fault.

"You are angry because I laughed?" she said.

I did not answer.

"Are you angry with me because I could not help laughing?"

I did not answer.

Then she came close to me and made as if to put her hands upon my shoulders, and when I looked straight upon her eyes she dropped her hands, made a sound in her throat, and turned and went away.

Then young Alec began to strut about like a bantam cock.

"I have to thank you for that performance," I said.

"Why would you prevent a woman from laughing?" says he, in a rage. "Don't you know enough of women to let them laugh and let them talk."

"I can lay no claim to such a knowledge as yourself," said I, in a mighty sneering voice. "In truth I know naught about them."

"You have proved that this night," retorted Alec.

"Expound that, you young oracle," said I.

"Expound? You have sent her away with a sore heart, and she was minded to be playful with you, and that cuts sore on a heart such as hers. Don't you see it, man?" he cried, sort of dashing his hands down.

"I see nothing of the sort. She was angry simply because I wouldn't speak back to her."

"You might have spoken to her or not spoken, and she would never have minded if you hadn't looked at her in the way you did."

I saw it was no use my trying to fathom the young donkey, so I would speak no more to him.

June Sixth, 1825

Labrie's wife was up last night but I would not go out to see her, being tired of the body and her endless chatter. Alec and she talked for an hour; the boy would be contented to go on vapouring forever, I believe. I pretended to be busy with my papers, and in the end she went away. She came to the window just before she went, and I heard her fingers on the sash, but I did not look up, and I heard her low gurgling laugh as she ran away from Alec, who would go down to the landing with her.

He is as polite to her and as formal as if he were living by a code of court etiquette. I twitted him with that.

"Well," he says, mighty stiff, and pulling a solemn face, "she is a woman, and she is another man's wife."

"The last is her great virtue," said I, with a tone of sarcasm, at which he looked scornful and exceeding pious.

June Seventh, 1815

Good news yesterday. Toma came in with a message from Godfrey. The Osnaburgh packs are safe at Cache Point on the Mud Lake route. The water is high and they have not had a mishap. In three days they should reach Negodina at the end of the lake. It is, as I have

always said, a route more clean and handy than the Wabinosh route, and it will be adopted now from this out.

June Eighth, 1815

Woke up with a mighty sore head this morning and had words with Alec. It is inconceivable how domineering that lad has become.

"You were drinking with Madame Labrie last night," he said.

"And my lord is jealous," I replied, sneering at him.

"Ye have made a fool of yourself. What did you tell her?"

"Nothing that I rightly remember. Since when were you ordained my catechist?"

"Now I have told you many times," he said in a parsoning way, "that you did not understand the nature of women, and that you would let slip something that Labrie wanted to know. Now you have done so, I believe, between a glass too much of whiskey and a pretty woman."

"Do you call yon a pretty woman?" I said, mocking his accent.

"I pity you!" he said, with great contempt.

He went away swinging his shoulders, much more the master than the man.

To set down the truth, although it be against myself, Labrie's wife came up in the evening of yesterday. I was more decent with the bitch, having had the good news, and I treated her to some whiskey, and drank with her. Alec was off watching Toma, as he thought Labrie might try to get hold of him. I do not just

remember when she went away. God forgive me, I do not rightly remember anything about it.

Hardly had Alec dismissed himself when he came back very greatly excited, but in anger this time.

"They have gone," said he.

"Who?" said I, not thinking for a moment.

"Who! My God! Who? Why Labrie."

"Well what of that?" I said. "It is a good riddance of a vile lot of thieves out of God's country."

"That is all you see to it?" he said.

"Well, what more?" I replied.

"I seem to see that last night you told Madame Labrie the packs were coming by the Mud Lake route to Negodina, and that they have gone to stop them. I have my doubt they will not barter with them. I seem to see that they will capture the furs and that by no very gentle means."

"You have said it before," I cried out, wroth with him and with myself. "So yon slut is what I have always supposed her to be."

A dark look came into his face. "Choose your words!" he cried, taking a step towards me.

"I'll neither pick nor choose my words," I said. "What do you call her then that would take our hospitality and then do us wrong?"

"Madaline would do no such thing," he cried, strutting about in a way that looked comical to me. I laughed at him.

"Madaline! Madaline! We shall see what Madaline will have done when we lose our furs. Why, man, you said out of your own mouth that she had done it."

"You lie," he cried, but it was here not impudence, so I paid no attention to him.

After some parley and conversation, I sent him with three canoes and all the able men, except Needic, to Negodina to see what had fallen out. He is to send me back a letter, as soon as he can, with the word. I am here now quite alone, and in mind very much put about. I have been striving to recall what passed between Labrie's wife and myself, but without any clear recollection. Ah, those women! I well remember my father used to say, "At the bottom of every trouble, there you will find a woman," and my mother used to retort, "And likewise at the bottom of every happiness." Whereupon he would kiss her.

June Tenth, 1815

Last night—waiting for word from Alec. This morning I went down to Labrie's camp with Needic. They had left two tents and some rubbish, and a little green box marked "M. L." Turning the lot over I found two empty kegs marked "H. B. Co.", once full of rum, which they had stolen from the cache on Keg Island. So we heaped all together and set fire to it. It burned merrily, and they are at least by that much the poorer.

June Eleventh, 1815

I am in great spirits today. Last night I was wakened by Needic, who had his boy with him. Everything had reached Negodina safely, and there was no sign anywhere of Labrie's party. They will push on at once.

June Twelfth, 1815

This morning Labrie came back. Needic came up and told me, so about noon I took my pistols and went down with him to the cove. They had one tent up and the women were making the fire. The men went off and none of them would speak to us. I stood smiling in a taunting way, and just as I was about to leave, Labrie's wife came over to me. I perceived she had her arm wound in a cloth.

"Well, Madame Labrie, how did you hurt your arm?"

"Why do you call me Madame Labrie?"

"One must call you something. My boy Alec calls you Madaline."

Her face grew a darker red.

"You have been away for a while?"

"Yes," she said, "we were at Wabinosh, and I see you burned my box when I was gone.

"Were you ever in love?" she asked suddenly.

"Never," said I, "praise be to God."

"When you are I pray heaven you may be tortured in it."

"I am thankful for your good wishes."

"The other night you told me your packs were coming by Negodina. You understand? It was Labrie who shot me through the arm. He wanted to kill me for taking them to Wabinosh, but the others would not let him."

"The low rascal," I said, "to shoot a woman."

"And *you* have nothing to say about *me?*" She looked at me curiously, and put an odd emphasis on the *you* and the *me.*

"It is fortunate you made a mistake."

"A mistake!" said she. "Your boy Alec is twice the man that you are."

The hussy said that with a fluff of pride.

"Good-bye," said I from my canoe.

"Is that all, Archibald Muir, is that all?"

"Good-bye," said I, "and I hope your husband won't shoot at you again."

I looked back when we had gone a bit, and she still stood there. She did not make any sign towards me, though I waved to her in courtesy. Then she covered up her face in her hands.

No word of Godfrey and Alec. I sent Needic to Labrie's wife with two gold guineas for the box I had burned, probably the only gold she ever clapped her eyes on, as it is unknown in this trade almost.

June Thirteenth, 1815

The packs came in yesterday evening. Godfrey and the men all well. I mixed a keg of spirits for them and they made a hideous night of it. Too busy to write much now, but can do nothing more to-night. Looking back in the store ledgers I can see no such winter's catch. Great good luck. Labrie's party still hanging around. Alec went down as soon as he got back, and stayed longer than he ought, so I berated him soundly. To-night at supper he said:

"Labrie shot her through the arm because she had taken them to Wabinosh and had misled them."

I paid no attention to him. By and by he said:

"You will be glad to know that she says you told her nothing about the packs."

"Did she?" said I, puzzled, as she had told me the contrary.

"I don't believe her," he added.

"You're complimentary to the ladies," I remarked.

"Here is something she asked me to give you."

It was the money I had sent her for that box of hers I burnt.

June Fourteenth, 1815

Busy all day between the storehouse and the fur press. Half the Indians are drunk yet. Alec says Labrie and his party have gone. May the devil's luck go with them. I thought Alec looked a trifle white in the face, and as if he was impatient to make me talk, but I had no time to be spending with him.

June Fifteenth, 1815

A wonderfully warm day, and the flies very bad, enough to madden one. Have pressed all the packs and now everything is in order for a move. What a grand night for the partners it will be when they see our canoes full of the finest come to land at Fort William. It should be of profit to me, and I expect to come back here or go somewhere a factor, if I comprehend the rules properly. About an hour ago I had just finshed writing the last words when Alec's shadow came over the window. He seemed to stand there over long, and I was just on the point of crying out to him when he moved off. In a moment he came in to me. I did not look up from my writing when he flung a scrap of paper down before me.

"There!" he said, in an odd voice. "I found it under the sash. It fell face down, so, as I saw printing

on the back, I thought it was but a scrap torn off a fur bill.

"Read it," said he.

I turned it over and observed that there were some words in writing on the other side. I made them out to be: "Why do you call me Labrie's wife? She is my aunt. Do you think I would marry an ugly fellow like Labrie. They brought me up here to help their plans. We shall see. If you want to know my name it's Madaline Lesage. I learned to write from the Sister St. Theresa at Wikwemikong. Is it not pretty? M.L."

Then I recalled how she had come to the window, one night not very long ago, when I opine she had left the paper there.

"Well!" I said coolly, "and what is it now that you have to say about Madaline Lesage?"

His face had a tortured look upon it. He tried to speak. "She was—she was the bravest, the dearest" —he stopped there and hung down his head. "Oh, my God, you cannot understand. You can never understand!"

He moved away and stood by the door. I thought upon what he had said. No, I did not understand. Then I tried once more to go on with my page. But I was detained by a sound which is as uncommon as that of laughter in these outlandish parts. The sound of sobbing. Just for a moment it brought back to me the sound of my sister's voice as she sobbed for her lover when they brought him back dead and dripping out of the sea. I had a vision of it as if it were snapped upon my eye in a flash of lightning, she leaning her forehead upon her wrists against the wall. I looked up at Alec

and there he was leaning at the door-post, his shoulders all moving with his sobs. I understood in a flash. I pray God to forgive me for the sin of blindness, and for always being so dead to others in my own affairs. I went towards him knowing that I could not give him any comfort. So he went out from the house and walked alone through the gloaming. I perceived that a change had come over him. I had always considered him a bit of a boy to be ordered about, but there was a man walking away from me, resolute in his steps, big in his bulk, and weighed down as if he was carrying a load, bearing it as if he were proud of it, with energy and trust in himself.

THE ESSENCE OF A MAN

By ALAN SULLIVAN

THROUGH level lines of streaming snow, a huge figure loomed large and portentous. Vanishing in blinding gusts, it ever and ever appeared again, thrusting itself onward with dogged persistence. Across flat and frozen plains forged the great piston-like legs, driving down his snow-shoes with a clocklike regularity that suggested, rather than told of, enormous muscular force. Behind him, knee-deep, toiled five yellow-coated, black-muzzled dogs, their shoulders jammed tight into their collars, their tawny sides rippling with the play of straining tendons; and, last of all, a long, low toboggan lurched indomitably on, the trampled trail breaking into a surge of powdered snow under its curving bow.

Into the teeth of the gale pushed this pigmy caravan —a gale that was born on the flat shores of Hudson Bay, that breasted the slopes of the Height of Land, that raged across the blank white expanse of Lac Seul, and was now shrieking down, dire and desolate, to the ice-bound and battlemented borders of Lake Superior. It was a wind that had weight. Tom Moore felt its vast and impalpable force, as he leaned against it, when he stopped for breath. It assaulted him—it tore steadily, relentlessly, at him, as if seeking to devour—it lashed

the stinging grains into his face, and into the open mouths of his panting dogs—it smoothed out the crumpled trail as the wake of a ship is obliterated by closing waters—till, a moment after his passing, the snow ridges lay trackless and unruffled. Still, however insignificant in these formless wastes, that silent progress held steadily on; and so it had held from early morn. These black specks on the measureless counterpane, guided by some unfailing instinct that lurked far back in the big half-breed's brain, were making an unswerving line for a wooded point that thrust out a faint and purple finger, far ahead in the gathering dusk. As they drew slowly in, the wind began to abate its force, and Tom, peering out from the mass of ice that was cemented to his mouth and eyes, looked for some sheltering haven. The dogs smelled the land, and more eagerly flung themselves into the taut traces, while over them gathered the shadows of the welcome woods.

Peter Anderson, the Hudson Bay factor at Lac Seul, was low in provisions, and had sent to the Ignace post a curt suggestion that the deficiency be supplied; and Tom Moore's laden toboggan was the brief but practical answer to his letter. The three-hundred-pound load was made up of the bare necessities of life—pork, flour, and the like; these, delivered, would be worth seventy-five cents a pound and thirty dollars a sack respectively; and Tom was the arbiter of transportation. In summer his canoe thrust its delicate bows through the waterways that interlaced the two posts, and in winter his snowshoes threaded the stark and frozen wilderness. He had always travelled alone on the ice. Nature had moulded him with such a titan frame, so huge and powerful a

body, so indomitable and fearless a soul, that he had become accustomed to laughing at the fate that overtook many of his tribe. They disappeared every now and then, utterly, silently, and mysteriously; but ever Big Tom moved on, an incarnation of force and of life that mocked at death.

When, two days before, MacPherson had summoned him to the Ignace post and pointed to the pile of provisions, and said laconically: "For Anderson, at Lac Seul," Tom had merely grunted, "How", and set out to harness his dogs. But the last day had brought him more serious reflections. By the flight of the goose it was two hundred miles and by the winter trail perhaps two hundred and fifteen; and of these forty now lay behind him.

He made his camp, he lit his fire, he flung to each ravenous dog a frozen whitefish, and ate, himself, almost as sparingly; then, rolled in his rabbit-skin blanket, he lay down on his back, and looked up at the winking stars.

About midnight the wind changed and veered into the south-east, bringing with it a clammy drizzle, half snow, half rain, that plastered the trees with a transparent enamel, and spread over the surface of the earth a sheet of ice, half an inch thick, and exceedingly sharp.

In that shivering hour which heralds the dawn, a branch cracked sharply a little distance from the camp. One of the dogs twitched an ear, and Tom was too deep in sleep to notice it. The five huskies were buried in snow beneath a tree, from a branch of which swung a sheaf of rigid fish, suspended in the air for security. But, in the half-light, something moved, a something that turned upon the smouldering fire great luminous

eyes—globes that seemed to receive the glow of the dull coals, and give it out again in changing iridescence. Around the eyes was a white-grey mask, crowned by short black-pointed ears; behind the ears moved noiselessly a tawny body, with heavy legs and broad, soft pads. It slipped from tree to tree, touching the ground lightly here and there, till the great lynx hung, motionless and menacing, above the sleeping camp. It stopped, sniffed the tainted air, and then stared, fascinated, at the sheaf of fish, which hung, revolving, in tantalizing proximity. Silently, with dainty and delicate caution, the lynx laid itself out on the branch, and, clinging tight, stretched out a curved forepaw; it just touched its object, and set it swaying. Again the paw went out, and again fell short. A quicker thrust, and the big pads slipped on the frozen wood, and, with a scream, the great cat fell fair on the sleeping dogs.

In an instant the air was split with a frenzy of noise. Tom sprang up and saw a maelstrom of yellow forms, a convulsive contorted mass, from which came the vicious snap of locking jaws, the yelp of agonized animals, and the short, coughing bark of the lynx. Around and in and out they rolled, buried in fur and snow. The wolf was born again in the huskies, and with all their primal ferocity, they assailed each other and a common enemy. Two of them crawled away, licking great wounds from deadly claws; and then gradually the battle waned, until it died in a fugue of howls, and the marauder escaped, torn and bleeding, into the silence from which he came.

Tom stood helpless, and then, when the three came limping home, went over to where his two best dogs lay,

licking great gashes—for the lynx had literally torn them open. As he approached, they lifted their full black lips, till the long fangs shone, ivory white; and death and defiance gurgled in their throbbing throats. A glance told him that nothing could be done; the frost was already nipping the raw flesh till they snapped at their own vitals in desperation. He raised his axe, once, twice—and his two best huskies lay on a blanket of blood-stained snow, with twitching bodies and glazing eyes.

Then, very soberly, he examined the others. They were still fit for harness; so, in the yellow light that began to flood the world, he shortened his traces, twisted his feet into his toe straps, and, with never a look behind, faced again the burden of the day.

The trail was hard to break. The crust, that would not carry the dogs, was smashed down, and tilted cakes of ice fell over on his shoes, a deck load that made them a weariness to lift. Behind floundered the toiling huskies, the leader's nose glued to the tail of the trailing shoes. What vast reserve of strength did man and beast then draw upon, Tom could not have told you; but, hour after hour, the small, indomitable train went on. As the day lengthened, Tom shortened his stride; for the dogs were evidently giving out, and his thigh muscles were burning like hot wires. At four o'clock the team stopped dead, the leader swaying in his tracks. The big half-breed, running his hands over the shaking body, suddenly found one of them warm and wet—it was sticky with blood. Then he saw blood on the trail; looking back, he saw crimson spots as far as the eye could distinguish them; lifting the matted hide, he revealed a gash

from which oozed great, slow drops. The valiant brute had drained his life out in a gory baptism of that killing trail. Then Tom sat down in dumb despair, took the lean yellow head upon his knees, smoothed the tawny fur back from those clouding eyes, and set his teeth hard as the dying beast licked his caressing hand in mute fidelity.

The great frame grew rigid as he watched, and slowly into the man's mind, for the first time in all his life, came doubt. Perhaps it was more of wonderment. It was not any suggestion of failing powers, imminent danger, or impending hardships; it was rather a mute questioning of things which he had always heretofore accepted, as he did the rising and sinking of the sun—things which began and ended with the day. His reasonings were slow and laborious; his mind creaked, as it were, with the effort—like an unused muscle, it responded with difficulty. Then, finally, he saw it all.

Long ago, when his mother died, she had warned him against the false new gods which the white man had brought from the big sea water, and in her old faith had turned her face to the wall of her tepee. She had been buried in a tree-top, near a bend of the Albany River, where it turns north from Nepigon and runs through the spruce forests that slope down to Hudson Bay. But Tom had listened to the new story—more than that, he had hewed square timber for the Mission Church at Ignace; and now—retribution had come, at last. No sooner had the idea formulated itself, than it seized upon him; and then there rose to meet it—defiance. Grimly, he slackened the collar from the dead husky, and laid the empty traces across his own breast; savagely he

thrust forward, and started the toboggan, and the diminished company stayed and stopped not till, once again, the darkness came.

That night the two surviving dogs eyed him furtively, when he flung them their food. They did not devour it ravenously, as was their custom; but crouched, with the fish under their paws, and followed, with shifting look, every move he made. He was too weary to care; but had he watched them an hour later, the sight would have convinced him that there was an evil spirit abroad in those frosty woods.

Noiselessly they approached his sleeping form, sniffing intently at everything in the camp. He lay, massive and motionless, wrapped in an immense rabbit-skin blanket, one fold of which was thrown over the bag that held his provisions; his giant body was slack, relaxed, and full of great weariness.

The dogs moved without a sound, till they stood over the sleeping man. The long hair rose in ridges along their spines, as they put their noses to his robe, and sniffed at their unconscious master; for whether it was the fight with the lynx, or that yellow body out on the ice, some new and strange thing had come into their blood; they had reverted to the primal dog, and no longer felt the burden of the collar or the trace—the labour of the trail had passed from them.

At first, the smell of the man repelled them, but it was only for a moment; their lean shoulders swayed as their twitching noses ran over his outline, and then a new scent assailed them. It was the provision bag. Gently, and with infinite precaution, they pulled it. Tom stirred, but only stirred. The sack was trailed out

over the snow, and the tough canvas soon gave way before those murderous teeth. In silence, and in hunger, they gorged; what they could not eat was destroyed, till, finally, with bulging sides, they lay down and slept, in utter repletion.

It was the sun on his face that woke Tom to a consciousness of what had happened. He felt for the bag, and, finding it not, looked at the dogs, and, on seeing them, raised his hand in anger. Now this was a mistake; few dogs will wait for punishment, least of all a half-savage husky who expects it. He approached, they retreated; he stopped, they squatted on their haunches and eyed him suspiciously; he retreated, they did not move; he held out a fish, they were supremely indifferent. They had entered a new world, which was none of his; they suddenly found that they did not have to obey—and when man or beast reasons thus, it spells ruin. All his arts were exhausted and proved fruitless, and then Tom knew that an evil spirit—a Wendigo—was on his trail.

To push forward was his first instinct. Slowly, he rolled up the blanket, and laced it to the toboggan; and, as the sun topped the rim of the land, the unconquerable breed struck out across the ice, the traces tugging at his shoulders. A few yards behind followed the enfranchized team, drunk with the intoxication of their new-found liberty. Never did he get within striking distance, but ever he was conscious of those soft, padding sounds; he felt as if they were always about to spring at his defenceless back; but all through the weary day they followed, elusive, mysteriously threatening.

He pulled up, faint with hunger, in the mid-afternoon, and went into a thicket of cedar to set rabbit snares; but no sooner had he turned than the dogs were at the toboggan. A ripping of canvas caught his ear, and he rushed back in fury. They fled at his approach, and lay, flat on the snow, their heads between their paws; so Tom pulled up his load, built a fire beside it, and watched the huskies till morning. He had now one hundred miles to go; he had three hundred pounds to pull and no dogs; he could not, dare not, sleep; and he had no food, but—Anderson was waiting at Lac Seul.

Who can enter into those next days? Through the storms—and they were many—moved a gigantic figure, and, after it, crawled a long, coffin-like shape; and behind the shape trotted two wolfish forms, with lean flanks and ravenous jaws. Across the crystalline plains plodded the grim procession, and, at night, the red eye of a camp fire flung its flickering gleam on those same threatening forms, as they moved restlessly and noiselessly about, watching and waiting, waiting and watching. As his strength diminished with the miles, Tom began to see strange things, and hear curious and pleasant sounds. Then he got very sleepy; the snow was just the colour of the twenty-dollar blankets in the H.B. post; it was not cold now; he experienced a delicious languor; and people began to talk all around him; only they wouldn't answer when he shouted at them. Then the Wendigo came, and told him to lie down and rest, and, as he was taking off his shoes, another spirit called out:

"Kago, kago—nebowah neepah panemah."

("Don't, don't! You will find rest by and by.")

At noon, on the eighth day after Tom left Ignace post, Peter Anderson looked across the drifts of Lac Seul, and shook his head. The horizon was blotted out in a blizzard that whipped the flakes into his face like needle points, and the distance dissolved in a whirling view. The bush had been cleared away around his buildings, and, in the bare space, a mighty wind swooped and shrieked. As he turned, the gale lifted for a moment, and, infinitely remote, something appeared to break the snow line at the end of a long white lane of dancing wreaths; then the storm closed down, and the vision was lost. Keenly, he strained through half-closed lids; once more something stirred, and, suddenly, the wind began to slacken. In the heart of it was staggering a giant shape, that swayed and tottered, but doggedly, almost unconsciously, moved on into the shelter of the land; behind trailed a formless mass, and, last of all, the apparitions of two lank, limping dogs.

Drunkenly and unseeingly, but with blind, indomitable purpose, the man won every agonizing step. His snow-shoes were smashed to a shapeless tangle of wood and sinew; his face was gaunt, patched with grey blots of frost-bite; and through his sunken cheeks, the high bones stood out like knuckles on a clenched fist. Ice was plastered on his cap, and lay fringed on brow and lids, but beneath them burned eyes that glowed with dull fires, quenchless and abysmal. By infinitesimal degrees he drew in, with not a wave of the hand, not a sign of recognition. Up the path, from shore to trading post, shouldered the titan figure, till it reached the door. At the latch, stiff, frozen fingers were fumbling, as Anderson flung it open; and then a vast bulk darkened the threshold,

swung in helpless hesitation for a fraction of time, and pitched, face foremost, on the rough pine floor.

A few hours later, he looked up from the pile of skins upon which Anderson had rolled him. His eyes wandered to the figure of the trader, who sat, serenely smoking, regarding with silent satisfaction a small mountain of provisions.

"All here, boss?"

"Ay, Tom, all here, and I'm muckle obliged to ye; are ye hungry, Tom? Will ye hae a bit sup?"

"No eat for five days; pull toboggan. No dogs."

Anderson stiffened where he sat. "What's that? Haulin' three hunder' of grub, and ye were starvin? Ye big copper-coloured fule!"

"No packer's grub, boss; Hudson Bay grub!"

It was almost a groan, for Tom was far spent.

Involuntarily the quiet Scot lifted his hands in amazement, and then hurried into his kitchen, murmuring, as he disappeared: "Man, man, it's with the likes of ye that the Hudson Bay keeps its word."

THE PRIVILEGE OF THE LIMITS

By EDWARD WILLIAM THOMSON

YES, indeed, my grandfather wass once in jail," said old Mrs. McTavish, of the County of Glengarry, in Ontario, Canada; "but that wass for debt, and he wass a ferry honest man whateffer, and he would not broke his promise—no, not for all the money in Canada. If you will listen to me, I will tell chust exactly the true story about that debt, to show you what an honest man my grandfather wass.

"One time Tougal Stewart, him that wass the poy's grandfather that kept the same store in Cornwall to this day, sold a plough to my grandfather, and my grandfather said he would pay half the plough in October, and the other half whateffer time he felt able to pay the money. Yes, indeed, that was the very promise my grandfather gave.

"So he was at Tougal Stewart's store on the first of October early in the morning pefore the shutters wass taken off, and he paid half chust exactly to keep his word. Then the crop wass ferry bad next year, and the year after that one of his horses wass killed by lightning, and the next year his brother that wass not rich and had a big family, died, and do you think wass my grandfather to let the family be disgraced without a good funeral? No, indeed. So my grandfather paid for the funeral,

and there was at it plenty of meat and drink for everybody, as wass the right Hielan' custom those days; and after the funeral my grandfather did not feel chust exactly able to pay the other half for the plough that year either.

"So, then, Tougal Stewart met my grandfather in Cornwall next day after the funeral, and asked him if he had some money to spare.

" 'Wass you in need of help, Mr. Stewart?' says my grandfather, kindly. 'For if it's in any want you are, Tougal,' says my grandfather, 'I will sell the coat off my back, if there is no other way to lend you a loan'; for that was always the way of my grandfather with all his friends, and a bigger-hearted man there never wass in all Glengarry, or in Stormont, or in Dundas, moreofer.

" 'In want!' says Tougal—'in want, Mr. McTavish!' says he, very high. 'Would you wish to insult a gentleman, and him of the name of Stewart, that's the name of princes of the world?' he said, so he did.

"Seeing Tougal had his temper up, my grandfather spoke softly, being a quiet, peaceable man, and in wonder what he had said to offend Tougal.

" 'Mr. Stewart,' says my grandfather, 'it wass not in my mind to anger you whatefer. Only I thought, from your asking me if I had some money, that you might be looking for a wee bit of a loan, as many a gentleman has to do at times, and no shame to him at all,'" said my grandfather.

" 'A loan?' says Tougal, sneering. 'A loan, is it? Where's your memory, Mr. McTavish? Are you not owing me half the price of the plough you've had these three years?'

" And wass you asking me for money for the other half of the plough?' says my grandfather, very astonished.

" 'Just that,' says Tougal.

" 'Have you no shame or honour in you?' says my grandfather, firing up. "How could I feel able to pay that now, and me chust yesterday been giving my poor brother a funeral fit for the McTavishes' own grandnephew, that wass as good chentleman's plood as any Stewart in Glengarry. You saw the expense I wass at, for there you wass, and I thank you for the politeness of coming, Mr. Stewart,' says my grandfather, ending mild, for the anger would never stay in him more than a minute, so kind was the nature he had.

" 'If you can spend money on a funeral like that, you can pay me for my plough,' says Stewart; for with buying and selling he wass become a poor creature, and the heart of a Hielan' man wass half gone out of him, for all he wass so proud of his name of monarchs and kings.

"My grandfather had a mind to strike him down on the spot, so he often said; but he thought of the time when he hit Hamish Cochrane in anger, and he minded the penances the priest put on him for breaking the silly man's jaw with that blow, so he smothered the heat that wass in him, and turned away in scorn. With that Tougal Stewart went to court, and sued my grandfather, puir mean creature.

" You might think that Judge Jones—him that wass judge in Cornwall before Judge Jarvis that's dead—would do justice. But no, he made it the law that my grandfather must pay at once, though Tougal Stewart could not deny what the bargain wass.

" 'Your Honour,' says my grandfather, 'I said I'd pay when I felt able. And do I feel able now? No. I do not,' says he. 'It's a disgrace to Tougal Stewart to ask me, and himself telling you what the bargain was,' said my grandfather. But Judge Jones says that he must pay, for all that he did not feel able.

" 'I will nefer pay one copper till I feel able,' says my grandfather; 'but I'll keep my Hielan' promise to my dying day, as I always done,' says he.

"And with that the old judge laughed, and said he would have to give judgment. And so he did; and after that Tougal Stewart got out an execution. But not the worth of a handful of oatmeal could the bailiff lay hands on, because my grandfather had chust exactly taken the precaution to give a bill of sale on his gear to his neighbour, Alexander Fraser, that could be trusted to do what was right after the law play was over.

"The whole settlement had great contempt for Tougal Stewart's conduct, but he was a headstrong body, and once he begun to do wrong against my grandfather, he held on, for all that his trade fell away; and finally he had my grandfather arrested for debt, though you'll understand, sir, that he was owing Stewart nothing that he ought to pay when he didn't feel able.

"In those times prisoners for debt was taken to jail in Cornwall, and if they had friends to give bail that they would not go beyond the posts that was around the sixteen acres nearest the jail walls, the prisoners could go where they liked on that ground. This was called 'the privilege of the limits'. The limits, you'll understand, wass marked by cedar posts painted white about the size of hitching-posts.

"The whole settlement was ready to go bail for my grandfather if he wanted it, and for the health of him he needed to be in the open air, and so he gave Tuncan Macdonnell of the Greenfields, and Aeneas Macdonald of the Sandfields, for his bail, and he promised, on his Hielan' word of honour, not to go beyond the posts. With that he went where he pleased, only taking care that he never put even the toe of his foot beyond a post, for all that some prisoners of the limits would chump ofer them and back again, or maybe swing round them, holding by their hands.

"Efery day the neighbours would go into Cornwall to give my grandfather the good word, and they would offer to pay Tougal Stewart for the other half of the plough, only that vexed my grandfather, for he was too proud to borrow, and, of course, every day he felt less and less able to pay on account of him having to hire a man to be doing the spring ploughing and seeding and making the kale-yard.

"All this time, you'll mind, Tougal Stewart had to pay five shillings a week for my grandfather's keep, the law being so that if the debtor swore he had not five pounds' worth of property to his name, than the creditor had to pay the five shillings, and, of course, my grandfather had nothing to his name after he gave the bill of sale to Alexander Fraser. A great diversion it was to my grandfather to be reckoning up that if he lived as long as his father, that was hale and strong at ninety-six, Tougal would need to pay five or six hundred pounds for him, and there was only two pound five shillings to be paid on the plough.

"So it was like that all summer, my grandfather keeping heartsome, with the neighbours coming in so steady to bring him the news of the settlement. There he would sit, just inside one of the posts, for to pass his jokes, and tell what he wished the family to be doing next. This way it might have kept going on for forty years, only it came about that my grandfather's youngest child—him that was my father—fell sick, and seemed like to die.

"Well, when my grandfather heard that bad news, he wass in a terrible way, to be sure, for he would be longing to hold the child in his arms, so that his heart was sore and like to break. Eat he could not, sleep he could not: all night he would be groaning, and all day he would be walking around by the posts, wishing that he had not passed his Hielan' word of honour not to go beyond a post; for he thought how he could have broken out like a chentleman, and gone to see his sick child, if he had stayed inside the jail wall. So it went on three days and three nights pefore the wise thought came into my grandfather's head to show him how he need not go beyond the posts to see his little sick poy. With that he went straight to one of the white cedar posts, and pulled it up out of the hole, and started for home taking great care to carry it in his hands pefore him, so he would not be beyond it one bit.

"My grandfather wass not half a mile out of Cornwall, which was only a little place in those days, when two of the turnkeys came after him.

" 'Stop, Mr. McTavish,' says the turnkeys.

" 'What for would I stop?' says my grandfather.

" 'You have broke your bail,' says they.

" 'It's a lie for you,' says my grandfather, for his temper flared up for anybody to say he would broke his bail. 'Am I beyond the post?' says my grandfather.

"With that they run in on him, only that he knocked the two of them over with the post, and he went on rejoicing, like an honest man should at keeping his word and overcoming them that would slander his good name. The only thing pesides thought of the child that troubled him was questioning whether he had been strictly right in turning round for to use the post to defend himself in such a way that it was nearer the jail than he wass. But when he remembered how the jailer never complained of prisoners of the limits chumping ofer the posts, if so they chumped back again in a moment, the trouble went out of his mind.

"Pretty soon after that he met Tuncan Macdonnell of Greenfields, coming into Cornwall with the wagon.

" 'And how is this, Glengatchie?' says Tuncan. 'For you were never the man to broke your bail.'

"Glengatchie, you'll understand, sir, is the name of my grandfather's farm.

" 'Never fear, Greenfields,' says my grandfather, 'for I'm not beyond the post.'

"So Greenfields looked at the post, and he looked at my grandfather, and he scratched his head a wee, and he seen it was so; and then he fell into a great admiration entirely.

" 'Get in with me, Glengatchie—it's proud I'll be to carry you home'; and he turned his team around. My grandfather did so, taking great care to keep the post in front of him all the time; and that way he reached home. Out comes my grandmother running to embrace

him; but she had to throw her arms around the post and my grandfather's neck at the same time, he was that strict to be within his promise. Pefore going ben the house, he went to the back end of the kale-yard which was farthest from the jail, and there he stuck the post; and then he went back to see his sick child, while all the neighbours that came round was glad to see what a wise thought the saints had put into his mind to save his bail and his promise.

"So there he stayed a week till my father got well. Of course the constables came after my grandfather, but the settlement would not let the creatures come within a mile of Glengatchie. You might think, sir, that my grandfather would have stayed with his wife and weans, seeing the post was all the time in the kale-yard, and him careful not to go beyond it; but he was putting the settlement to a great deal of trouble day and night to keep the constables off, and he was fearful that they might take the post away, if ever they got to Glengatchie, and give him the name of false, that no McTavish ever had. So Tuncan Greenfields and Aeneas Sandfield drove my grandfather back to jail, him with the post behind him in the wagon, so as he would be between it and the jail. Of course Tougal Stewart tried his best to have the bail declared forfeited; but old Judge Jones only laughed, and said my grandfather was a Hielan' gentleman, with a very nice sense of honour, and that was chust exactly the truth.

"How did my grandfather get free in the end? Oh, then, that was because of Tougal Stewart being careless —him that thought he knew so much of the law. The law was, you will mind, that Tougal had to pay five

shillings a week for keeping my grandfather in the limits. The money wass to be paid efery Monday, and it was to be paid in lawful money of Canada, too. Well, would you belief that Tougal paid in four shillings in silver one Monday, and one shillings in coppers for he took up the collection in church the day pefore, and it wass not till Tougal had gone away that the jailer saw that one of the coppers was a Brock copper,—a medal, you will understand, made at General Brock's death, and not lawful money of Canada at all. With that the jailer came out to my grandfather.

" 'Mr. McTavish,' says he, taking off his hat, 'you are a free man, and I'm glad of it.' Then he told him what Tougal had done.

" 'I hope you will not have any hard feelings toward me, Mr. McTavish,' said the jailer; and a decent man he wass, for all that there wass not a drop of Hielan' blood in him. 'I hope you will not think hard of me for not being hospitable to you, sir,' says he; 'but it's against the rules and regulations for the jailer to be offering the best he can command to the prisoners. Now that you are free, Mr. McTavish,' says the jailer, ' I would be a proud man if Mr. McTavish of Glengatchie would do me the honour of taking supper with me this night. I will be asking your leave to invite some of the gentlemen of the place, if you will say the word, Mr. McTavish,' says he.

"Well, my grandfather could never bear malice, the kind man he was, and he seen how bad the jailer felt, so he consented, and a great company came in, to be sure, to celebrate the occasion.

"Did my grandfather pay the balance on the plough? What for should you suspicion, sir, that my grandfather would refuse his honest debt? Of course he paid for the plough, for the crop was good that fall.

" 'I would be paying you the other half of the plough now, Mr. Stewart,' says my grandfather, coming in when the store was full.

" 'Hoich, but *YOU* are the honest McTavish!' says Tougal, sneering.

"But my grandfather made no answer to the creature, for he thought it would be unkind to mention how Tougal had paid out six pounds four shillings and eleven pence to keep him in on account of a debt of two pound five that never was due till it was paid."

"HE WHO LAUGHS LAST—!"

By FREDERICK WILLIAM WALLACE

CAPTAIN DENMAN MITCHELL, of the Bank fishing schooner *Artimon*, was a high-line fisherman but a hard citizen. He loved two things—rum and money—and he hated pedlars—especially Tony Anderson.

Mitchell's fishing schooner *Artimon* was lying out in the bay with her mainsail up awaiting her skipper ere swinging off on a halibuting trip to Green Bank. The gang were all aboard and mostly congregated in the cabin looking critically over the bargains which Tony Anderson, a local pedlar, was displaying for their purchase. Tony was small, mean-looking, and red-haired, and came of a family that never was known to do manual labour of any kind but trucking and trading with the farmers and fishermen of the coast settlements. The plain-talking trawlers of East Harbour treated him with undisguised contempt, yet they willingly purchased the shoddy goods he had to sell and cursed him and their foolishness afterwards.

Tony had his gasolene motor-boat alongside and kept a weather eye lifting for Skipper Mitchell's coming. Tony didn't want to meet Mitchell for various reasons, but he felt that he had a good half-hour for business ere the hard-case Denman came aboard his vessel. "Now

jest look at this shirt," he was saying as he held up a purple-coloured piece of flannelette decorated with embroidered flowers and pearl buttons. "There's a real bargain for a man as wants a dressy piece o' goods to go ashore and sport the girls in. Stout and strong enough for workin' in the dory too. Real flannel and hand embroidered. All wool but the buttons. What'll ye gimme for this beautiful, beautiful shirt?"

"Thirty cents," offered a man.

"Aw, come off, Boss! You're jokin' with me. I ain't out here for me health. A dollar'n half takes it. I ain't got another one like it and I can't get no more of them. Who wants this elegant shirt?"

"I'll give ye a dollar for it," said a fisherman, busy seizing on halibut hooks.

"A dollar?" Tony's face puckered up in disgust. "Gorry! I got to make a livin' somehow with me old father and mother and a wife and ten kids to home—"

"Jest listen to the little runt," cried the prospective purchaser. "Why yer ol' man has more dough than he knows what to do with and you ain't got no wife and kids—"

"Here—take the shirt," barked Tony. "Everybody cheats me. I'm makin' no money at that price—" He paused with ears straining. Then he blanched visibly and began to buckle his pack in agitated haste. A fisherman laughed. "By Golly, Tony, th' skipper's jest come aboard. Ef he catches you here . . . there'll be the devil to pay an' no pitch hot!"

He had hardly spoken when the huge bulk of Skipper Mitchell blocked the cabin gangway and he roared a command to get under way. Clattering down into the

cabin with two rum bottles protruding from his coat pockets, Captain Denny halted in surprise at the foot of the ladder and stared at the perturbed Tony with a saturnine smile on his hard-beaten visage.

"Say, you!" he rumbled slowly, addressing Tony. "You're the guinney that done me on that pair of rubber boots. Ye sold me a spavvy horse. Ye foisted a bar'l o' vinegar on me for a bar'l o' rum and a few other things. Didn't I tell ye to keep clear of this here vessel and never set foot on her again?"

"Aw, Cap'en, don't be hard on a man," pleaded Tony, nervously buckling a pack strap and hunting for a means of escape with a roving eye. "It was legit'mate tradin'. You bought with yer eyes open. 'Sides, Cap'en,you got back at me with that old mains'l ye sold me. Ye had it all wet inside when it was weighed and I paid ye for two hundred pounds o' water. I lost—"

"That ain't here or there," growled Mitchell thickly and favouring Tony with a baleful stare. "I told you to keep clear of this here vessel and now I find ye aboard in spite of what I said. Well, now, seein' you're so fond of hangin' around, I'll keep you aboard for a spell—"

"Aw, quit foolin', Cap'en," pleaded the pedlar as he made a move to ascend the ladder. "I'll go now—"

Mitchell grabbed him with one of his ham-like hands and yanked him back. "You'll go when it pleases me to let ye go!" he barked decisively. "I'll carry you out to sea and give you a long drift home." To the grinning trawlers, he said, "Heave short the anchor, boys, an' git the fores'l on her. Mister Anderson's a-goin' to take a little trip with us."

The pedlar squirmed and struggled to get free but Mitchell held him with a grip of steel. "Be quiet now or I'll spank ye," he threatened with a grim laugh. "I'll set you adrift outside the Heads—"

"Don't, Cap'en," wailed Tony, still wriggling. "I ain't got enough gasolene to take me home—"

"Then, pull home, consarn ye!" bellowed the skipper. "It'll give you an idear of how we trawlers have to earn the money you git from us for yer dog's-wool-an'-oakum trash. A ten-mile buck agin th' tide 'ull do you good. Here, you rat! Git inside thar' an' keep quiet!" He hauled Anderson towards his berth, hove him, none too gently, inside, and slammed the sliding door.

"Now, me bully-boy," he growled as he snapped the padlock. "You can't git out 'less you eat through the bulkhead. Now, boys, we'll git away to sea!"

With Tony's little power dory towing astern, the *Artimon* swung out past East Harbour Heads with sheets off and all the patch of four lowers and the light sails hung. It was blowing a strong breeze offshore and when the schooner hauled away from the lee of the hills she began to feel the heft of the wind. Skipper Mitchell pawed the wheel and laughed to himself. "I sh'd let the little joker go now," he murmured, "but I've a mind to give him a trip. Yes, sink me eff I ain't got half a mind to take him down to the Cape and turn him adrift there. It'll cost the little rat somethin' in gas to git home."

"Ain't you goin' to let Tony go, Skipper?" enquired a fisherman lounging on the house. "Gittin' kinder rough out here."

The skipper chuckled hoarsely and glanced at the straining tops'ls before replying. " 'Deed, John, I have

a good notion to fetch him down to the Cape with us. Yes, I will! I'll turn him adrift down off the Cape. Take the wheel ! South by East!" And handing over the charge of the vessel, Mitchell went below to indulge in an outwardbound "nip" of rum. Unfortunately for Tony, the skipper did not stop at a single nip. If he had, Tony would have been released and allowed to depart. But rum always raised the devil in Mitchell, and by the time he had absorbed the best part of a bottle of "chain-lightning and barb-wire", he was all devil and ready for anything. "I won't set him ashore at all," he confided to the gang assembled below. "Swamp me, but I'll take him to Green Bank as spare hand and make a fisherman out of him. Ha! ha! Ain't that a good one, boys? Jest think of what the folks'll say! Shanghai-ing Tony Anderson an' makin' an honest fisherman outa him! Lord Harry, that's a good one, and to Green Bank he'll go as spare hand. H'ist that dory of his aboard an' stow it on the quarter. Ha! ha! That's some joke an' deserves a drink all round."

This was in the days before the Scott Act and prohibition, and the *Artimon* had a hard-drinking gang aboard—a reckless, jovial crowd who lived hard and worked hard and who believed in getting all the fun there was to be got out of life—usually via the rum bottle route. As each man had brought aboard enough "wet oilskins" to float a ship and had broached their "life-savers" soon after sailing, the skipper found the crowd in the humour to back up his practical joke. The unfortunate pedlar's pack was opened and the cabin gang helped themselves to the assorted contents and in liquorish good temper

arrayed their persons in the flaring shoddy and cheap trash.

When the nauseated and indignant Anderson was released late that night, he rushed on deck to find the schooner slugging along to a strong breeze and a lonely light was blinking out of the darkness on the starboard quarter.

"What light's that? Where are we?" he asked of the grinning fisherman at the wheel.

"That's Pine Island—"

"Pine Island! Pine Island!" screamed Tony. "Jumpin' Jupiter! We're eighty miles from East Harbour—"

Mitchell's head and broad shoulders appeared in the companion-way and he boomed out with a hoarse laugh, "Aye, my bully, and it won't be eighty but seven hundred an' eighty miles from East Harbour ye'll be afore we weather up the jumbo."

"You big sweep!" yelled Tony, shaking his fist at the laughing skipper. "You think this is a joke, you overgrown bully? Wait 'til I get back to East Harbour. I'll sue you! I'll bleed you! I'll have your hide on my barn door for this—"

Mitchell lumbered heavily out of the gangway and advanced on the angry little pedlar. "Gimme any sass and I'll turn you adrift right now. You come aboard agin my orders. Now you'll stay aboard an' work yer passage. I'm a-goin' to make a trawler out of you and by the time you git back home you'll be thankin' me for l'arnin' you a good honest trade 'stead of talkin' about bleedin' an' suin' me. Now, there ain't no law outside the three-mile limit but Denny Mitchell on this hooker, so git away for'ad and pick out a bunk for yerself afore

I lift you up in my teeth and jump overboard with you. You're a trawler now—not a blame guff-slingin', dollar-grabbin' pedlar deceivin' honest men with yer pack of bull-wool and brown-paper trash."

Sea-sick and afraid of the big skipper's mood, Anderson crawled along the spray-drenched deck towards the forecastle. As he stumbled for'ard he found his little motor-dory securely lashed and stowed on the quarter and felt a little better at the discovery. Then, with many misgivings, he clambered down into the fo'c'sle where he was uproariously welcomed by the crowd bunking there. Like a mob of schoolboys on holiday, they chaffed and teased him good-humouredly until, observing his distress occasioned by the motion of the vessel, they knocked off and assisted him into a spare berth.

"Never mind, old sock," laughed big Bill Jennings. "You'll be all right in the mornin'. Then a good guzzle of pea soup and fat pork'll fix your stomick up and you'n me will go dory-mates afore the trip's over." And they left him to his mental and physical misery.

The next day was one of bitter travail for Tony Anderson. It started at the breakfast table where the skipper chaffed him unmercifully and prophesied all manner of unpleasant happenings for Tony when the vessel made the Banks. Unable to stand Mitchell's rough humour, the little pedlar fled to the deck and sat between the dories feeling very miserable. He felt still more miserable when he noticed the men lounging around clad in shirts, hats, and trousers which they had not paid for.

"Sufferin' cats!" he exploded savagely. "I'll make that hog of a Mitchell pay for this. I'll skin him alive and use his hide for a door mat! I'll squeeze him until he yells for mercy! I'll tie him up in knots! I'll tie—" He was so vociferous in his threats that he did not hear the skipper coming along the deck until Mitchell's great paw smacked him on the shoulder. "And I'll give you some practice in tyin'," he boomed with a jeering smile. "Aloft ye go, now, and tie up that main gafftops'l!"

Tony jumped up as if he had been shot. "No, no, Cap'en," he pleaded abjectly with a frightened glance aloft. "I was only jokin'. I can't climb up there. I get dizzy. I ain't no sailor—"

"Then I'll make a sailor out of you, or else dog-fish bait. Up ye go!"

"I can't! I won't! I'll fall an' break my neck, sure!" shrieked the pedlar. "Oh, don't be hard on a man, Cap'en. Ye've ruined me already by takin' me away from business—"

Mitchell sang out to some men loafing around. "For'ad here—some of youse! Tony's a-goin' to tie that there tops'l up, but he's too darn lazy to climb. Send him up on the stays'l halyards!"

Four of the grinning fishermen grabbed Tony, and knotting a bow-line out of an old dory-painter, they placed their struggling victim in it; hooked on the stays'l halyard block, and swayed him up. When clear of the deck and swinging, pendulumwise, between the masts, Anderson ceased struggling but yelled and screamed in genuine terror.

"Sway him up!" growled the skipper's deep bass. "Up he goes! Hand over hand! Jumpin' Jupiter—!"

There came a terrified howl from Tony; the men hauling on the halyard rolled into the lee scuppers in a heap as the bow-line snapped and the pedlar plunged headlong from aloft into the sea.

"Hard down! Out dories!" roared Mitchell as he leaped for the lee nest and cut the gripes with a bait-knife. In less time than it takes to relate, the gang tumbled for'ard and the top dory was over the rail and in the water ere the *Artimon's* head-sails began to flap.

"Where is he? Kin ye see him?" bawled the men in the dory as they shipped their oars.

"Dead aft—in the wake. His red nut's ashowin'!" barked the anxious Mitchell. "Hurry, swabs, or I'll have murder on me soul!" And with the perspiration breaking out on his hard visage the skipper watched the rescuing dory in frightened hopefulness.

Red hair is often regarded as an unwelcome inheritance by those who possess it, but it was the salvation of Tony Anderson, for, like a vermilion trawl-buoy, it could be discerned a mile away against the blue-green of the sea. It wasn't long before the dory came up to him and strong hands grasped the spluttering and exhausted man and pulled him in. Little the worse for his dip, Tony scrambled over the schooner's rail, valiant with excess of rage.

Noting the fury in the little pedlar's eyes, Mitchell forestalled an outburst of vituperation by starting in himself. "What in blazes d'ye mean by trying to commit soo-side?" he roared. "Did ye think ye c'd swim ashore from here? Lord Harry! ye'll be the death o' me yet—" Tony recovered his breath, and, not to be intimidated, for two minutes he and the skipper had it out.

"You tried to murder me," yelped the little man, "and I'll have it in for you soon as we get in port. These men are all witnesses."

Mitchell's face grew serious. He was really alarmed and felt that his joking would land him in jail if he didn't placate the dripping fury threatening him with dire penalties.

"Now, now, my man, be reasonable," he growled soothingly. " 'Twas only a joke an' maybe I kin square things up with ye—"

"Nawthin' will square me but five hundred dollars and puttin' me on th' land somewheres," howled Tony. "Do that and I'll say nawthin'—"

"Is there anythin' more y'd like?" enquired the other sarcastically. "You might mention it."

"Yes—you can give me some dry clothes. Your men tore my shirt to pieces pullin' me into the dory."

Mitchell had recovered from his fright by this time and his quick brain was working double-tides. His imagination suggested a plan which tickled his sense of humour, and, at the same time, offered to get him out of the penalties threatened by his victim. He made a gesture of resignation and said glumly, "All right, Tony, you've got me clinched. Come down in th' cabin and we'll fix things up. Come along, boys, and see fair play 'twixt me an' Mister Tony!" And followed by the wondering gang, the skipper and the bedraggled pedlar led the way aft.

"First of all," said Mitchell mildly, as he sat on a locker, "ye want some dry clothes. Unfortunately, none of my duds 'ull fit ye or I'd be only too pleased to rig ye out. But I cal'late some of the boys 'ull oblige.

Jake! Jest gimme that shirt you bought off Mister Anderson the other day. That's it! Now, Tony, here's a shirt that'll fit ye. How'll that do?"

"That'll do fine, Cap'en," said the other as he hugged the stove.

"Good!" rumbled Mitchell, examining the shirt. "That's a beautiful, beautiful shirt. All wool but the buttons. Real flannel and hand embroidered. How much is it worth, Jake?"

"I paid a dollar for it," replied Jake, "but Tony says it's worth a dollar'n a half."

"Well then, Jake, if Mister Anderson says it's worth a dollar'n a half, he shall have it for a dollar'n a half. Give Jake a dollar'n fifty cents, Tony, and you shall have the shirt."

Anderson's eyes opened wide in consternation. "D'ye mean I've gotter pay for that shirt, Cap'en?" he cried in amazement. "A dollar'n a half—?"

"Why, sartinly," boomed Mitchell indignantly. "Didn't Jake pay you for it? D'ye think Jake's a millionaire to be givin' his hard-earned shirts away for nawthin' and you able to pay for them? The idea! Give th' man a dollar'n a half."

"He only paid me a dollar for it," protested Tony.

"That don't matter. You said it's worth a dollar'n a half and it sure is. Ye couldn't buy another like that out here for five hundred dollars'n a half. This is sea-price, m'lad, and dirt cheap." And after an almost tearful argument on the pedlar's part, Jake received the money.

"Now," continued Mitchell when that transaction was completed, "ye'll need a good pair of trousers. A

good pair of trousers—bull-wool and jute—same's John got from ye. John! Fetch them pants out—"

"I don't want them!" yelled the victim. "You're bleeding me. You're a pack of thieves an' murderers. Your men have stolen all the things that was in my pack. Gimme—"

"Hold yer tongue!" bawled the skipper amidst the laughter of the gang. "Them poor fellers has got to pay for the grub you're eatin' aboard here. Ain't they a-goin' to git some return for feedin' ye? Ain't I seen ye stuffin' yerself on pork an' beans an' fried sassidges an' doughnuts an' coffee this mornin'? Lord Harry, 'twas a wonder ye didn't sink with th' heft o' grub ye loaded into yer stummick. Give John three dollars for the pants and then we'll talk business.

Tony submitted calmly and looked forward to a future reckoning. Five hundred dollars from Mitchell would amply repay him for all he had suffered.

"And, now, havin' fitted you out shipshape and trawler fashion," observed the skipper, "we'll discuss the landin' business. Ye want to leave us, I cal'late?"

"Yes!" growled the other sullenly. Mitchell reached into the back of his bunk; pulled out a chart and studied it for a minute.

"Umph!" he grunted finally. "Suppose I put you in yer dory within a few hundred feet o' th' land, d'ye think ye c'd make yer way ashore? That oughter be close enough."

"That'll do," said Tony. "But how about the five hundred dollars I want for compensation?"

Mitchell nodded gravely and knit his brows.

"Aye, I near forgot that. Well, then, I'll tell ye what I'll do. I'll put ye within two or three hundred feet o' th' land in yer own dory, ef you're of the same mind about leaving us, and I'll give you my cheque for five hundred dollars to say nawthin' more about this business. Is that square?"

"When will you land me?" enquired the pedlar cautiously.

"Day after to-morrow ef all goes well," answered the other.

"It may be too rough," said Anderson suspiciously. "Maybe it won't be safe for me to risk it—"

"Then I'll heave-to ontil it moderates," replied the skipper. "I'll give you a fair chanst. I ain't a tough guy—not near as hard as what you think. I've a soft heart, I have, and—and I'm kinder sorry for my foolishness. 'Twas the rum what did it, and I trust ye'll not say anythin' 'bout this affair when ye git ashore, for 'tis a dear joke. Five hunder' dollars is a lot o' money. Won't ye let me off easier'n that, Mister?"

"Not a cent less," said the pedlar decisively.

"Then it'll have to be," rumbled Mitchell with a sigh.

The gang were looking at one another questioningly and the business instinct in Tony predominated at the skipper's strange change in attitude. He was suspicious, but did not care to say so. "Excuse me, Cap'en," he said respectfully. "Would you mind statin' them conditions again and have the men witness yer statement?"

"They've all h'ard what I said," rasped the other.

"Ye-e-s! But I'd like ye to say it again."

"All right! Here's what I say. Within the next two or three days I'll put you in yer own dory within two or three hundred feet of the land—"

"What land?" queried Tony sharply.

"Canada or Newfoundland," snapped Mitchell. "I dunno what particular spot o' land it'll be. Whatever's handiest. So long's it's land you don't need to care. It won't be a rock or an island—I ain't no bluffer—so don't get so blame suspicious. I'll give you my cheque for five hundred dollars on the Bank of East Harbour afore you go. Is that fair? You'll witness them words, boys. That'll go in any court o' law. Here's my bank-book, Mister, ain't that right?"

Tony examined the pass book, noted the last amount, and nodded his head. "All right, Cap'en. That's a go! But what'll I do with my motor-boat 'way up here?'

"Sell it, consarn ye, sell it!" barked Mitchell, and with a string of oaths, he left the dumbfounded occupants of the cabin and retired to his berth.

"Waal, by th' Great Trawl Hook!" ejaculated a man. "That's th' limit! I never knew Denny Mitchell to do a thing like that afore. I cal'late Tony's fallin' overboard has got him scared that he'll be hauled up for 'tempted murder when he gits ashore. That's th' reason beyond a doubt." And the others agreed with him.

Two days later, Captain Denman Mitchell squinted through his old quadrant at the sun; made some calculations with a nail upon the wheel-box, and jumped below for a glance at the Nautical Almanac and the chart.

"Shoot her up and take a cast!" he bawled from the interior of the cabin, and a few minutes later, the leadsman sung out the depth. "Forty-four faddom and sand and shells on th' butter!"

Mitchell came up on deck. "All right, John. Weather up yer jumbo! Start yer mainsheet an' put yer helm down. Git th' gang out and bait th' gear. We've made the grounds, but, first of all, send Mister Anderson aft."

When the pedlar came up to where the skipper was pacing, the latter handed him a signed cheque for five hundred dollars. "Thar's my cheque. The boys'll put yer dory over. We're square—ain't we?" Turning to the men trooping aft, Mitchell said, "Git Mister Anderson's dory over. He's leavin' us now—"

"But—but—but where's th' land?" stuttered Tony fearfully. "I don't see it—"

"Of course ye don't," rumbled the big skipper, "but it ain't far off."

"Then where is it?" enquired the other peering around at the blank horizon.

"Forty-four faddom beneath us," cried Mitchell with a grin. "Six times forty-four is two hunder an' sixty-four feet. That's th' nearest land hereabout. Go easy with Mister Anderson's dory, John! Use the stays'l halyards and th' dory-tackles. That's the idea. Now, Mister, ye have my cheque and there's yer dory over th' side. Two hunder an' sixty-four feet from here ye'll find land—"

"But it ain't dry land!" protested Tony in visible agitation.

"I niver said dry land," answered the skipper.

"Land was what I said and th' boys'ull bear me witness."

"And where is th' nearest dry land?" whimpered the pedlar.

"Cape Pine, Newf'nland, lies 'bout a hunder miles no'th-east of here. Cape Breton's a sight furder. Over ye go, now."

Advancing on the shrinking Anderson, the big skipper grasped him by the collar, and despite his kicks and howls swung him over the rail and into his dory.

"Beat it now!" he thundered viciously. "Y've got my five hunder' dollars and ye're within three hunder' feet o' solid earth. Pull the plug out of yer dory and ye'll be on the bottom in the shake of a mains'l. Cast him adrift—"

"Oh, don't do that, Cap'en Mitchell!" wailed Tony pitifully. "Lemme stay aboard. I won't say nawthin' —honest I won't. Don't turn me adrift to starve or drown out here—"

"Naw!" bawled the other. "I don't want ye. When you git back ye'll raise all kinds of trouble for me. Take yer chanst. Th' sea's smooth and there's dry land a hunder' miles no'th-east. Ef you come aboard here ye'll need to keep yer mouth shut and turn to and work for yer grub—"

"I'll do that, Cap'en," cried the pedlar eagerly.

"Shut yer trap and don't interrupt yer superiors!" growled Mitchell. "As I was asayin'—ye'll need to keep a shut mouth and work yer passage and pay yer passage as well."

"How much d'ye want?"

"Five hunder' dollars!" boomed the skipper with a grim smile on his hard face. "Gimme my cheque back and ye kin come aboard. Refuse, and I'll turn ye adrift and let th' gulls and Carey chickens have a feed on ye. Speak quick! I ain't a-goin' to waste all day bargainin' with you."

Tearfully the little pedlar produced the slip of paper and handed it up to Mitchell. "There it is, Cap'en," he said with a quaver in his voice. "You're makin' game of me and I can't do nawthin'. I kin come aboard now, can't I?"

"No, ye can't," returned the other. "Not until ye promise to say nawthin' 'bout what's happened aboard here. D'ye promise?"

"I promise!"

"Then come aboard," growled the skipper. "Ye'll work yer passage from now on, and as we're on the grounds we'll git th' light sails stowed away. Mister, you kin git that maintops'l tied up. You started the other day but ye didn't finish yer job. Spare hand's work is tyin' up tops'ls, so git busy."

Tony glanced apprehensively aloft to where the clewed-up gaff-tops'l bulged, balloon-like, half way up the topmast a hundred and ten feet from the deck. Shrinking back to the cabin house with terror in his eyes, he stared around at the hard, sea-bronzed faces of the assembled fishermen and in their countenances he detected no sign of pity. They were a hard-bitten crowd and any sign of squeamishness or cowardice awoke contempt instead of sympathy in their minds.

"Will I have to prod ye aloft with a trawl-splicer?" came Mitchell's raucous bellow. "Move, damn ye, or I'll—"

While the little man was whimpering in fright and backing away from the skipper, the big, good-humoured fisherman, Bill Jennings, elbowed his way through the mob and faced Mitchell.

"Say, Skip," he drawled, "go easy on th' poor lil' beggar. It ain't everyone as can go aloft first time and tie up tops'ls. I couldn't do it myself when I first went vessel fishin'. Give him a rest. I'll tie it up—ef you really want it tied up—"

The other growled resentfully. "Suppose you mind yer own blame business."

Jennings turned to the men. "Boys," he said calmly. "This ain't man's fun stringin' a poor l'il minim like that. It's a swab's game. We're a rough bunch o' skates, I know, but I cal'late we ain't downright brutes. Let him alone!"

The hard-case features relaxed into sheepish grins and an apologetic murmur arose from the crowd. "Sure, Skip," they said. "Bill's right. Give the little runt a chanst."

With a lowering glance at Jennings, the skipper felt the pulse of the mob, and, being a diplomat, he burst into a loud guffaw and slapped Tony heartily on the back. "Don't git scared, old timer," he rumbled. "I was only stringin' you. Now, boys, git yer gear out. We'll bait up and make a night set."

While Jennings was baiting up his trawls on the booby-hatch, a figure sneaked out from behind the dories and grasped his hand. "I'm only a poor devil of a pedlar," he said in heartfelt tones, "but I'll remember you. You—you're a man, Mister Jennings!"

"Tcha!" said the big fisherman with a laugh. "Run away or I'll bite ye!"

With his usual luck, Denman Mitchell worked Green Bank and scoffed nearly every halibut within the vicinity of his baited trawls. For eight days it was "oars up";

half-swamped dories and big "jags" on the *Artimon's* checkered deck. They made two sets a day, and in the evening, while the schooner jogged to the lighted watch-buoy marking the weather end of the fishing gear in the water, the men worked like slaves, blooding, gutting, and icing the catch of fish.

With sixty thousand pounds of fresh halibut and twenty-five thousand of cod, Mitchell shot into Canso for a few tons of ice to top off the pens of fish in the holds below. Though they dropped anchor inside the harbour, Tony made no attempt to escape. If he wished, he could easily have done so as Mitchell used the pedlar's gasolene dory to ferry the ice out to the vessel, and it was left, tied astern, during the time the *Artimon* lay in the port. The use of his dory for trucking ice was another injury which Anderson chalked up against Denny Mitchell.

Close to the *Artimon* lay a St. Servan fishing brig, and after stowing the ice below, Mitchell and a number of his gang went over to visit the Frenchman ere swinging off for East Harbour. Fraternizing with French members of the piscatorial community is commendable, but when North American trawlers pay visits to Breton brigs, it is not altogether with the spirit of *entente cordiale*, but rather with intent to procure cordial spirits. The plug tobacco, mittens, hooks, trawl becket lines and canned provisions which went with the *Artimon's* crowd were exchanged for sundry bottles of a peculiarly fiery brand of tangle-foot which is distilled in France for the delectation of palates able to relish anything in the liquor line from pain-killer to sulphuric acid.

When Mitchell and his crowd tumbled aboard hugging their bottles, all were the worse for their fraternal potations. It was a clear night with a strong breeze from the north-west, and after hoisting the dories aboard, Mitchell sung out to get under way. Under four lowers and dragging the star-board anchor under her fore-foot, the *Artimon*, with the skipper to the wheel, blundered through the fleet of Lunenburgers and Gloucestermen in the harbour, and swung out to sea.

With drunken sagacity, the big skipper pulled out a chart when they hauled clear of Cranberry Island, and, laying his parallels on a crack which ran across its face, he bellowed out the course to the fisherman who relieved the wheel. Having completed all that he thought was necessary in the way of navigation, he and the majority of the crowd commenced broaching the *eau de vie* they had procured from the Frenchman.

It was blowing very hard and with all four lowers set, the *Artimon* dragged her lee rail through the smother at a fourteen knot clip. In a forepeak bunk, Tony kept himself in obscurity and frightened wakefulness, while aft in the cabin the gang passed the bottle and sang maudlin songs to the roaring and swashing of the sea.

At three in the morning, Jennings and his dory-mate came off watch and down into the forecastle. The good-humoured fisherman was practically sober but his dory-mate had to be trundled into his bunk the worse for wear. Then Jennings spied the pedlar's frightened face peering at him from behind the pawl-post.

"I cal'late you're a-goin' to lose that there dory of your'n," said the fisherman as he opened the quick-lunch

cupboard. "It's towin' astern—Lord Harry, man, but you're as white as a ghost! Come out and have a mug-up."

Tony crawled out. "They're all drunk, Bill," he stuttered, "and it's blowin' a gale—"

"Gale nawthin'," laughed the other, burying his face in a mug of coffee. "Don't worry, son. It ain't the fust time we've gone to sea with all hands pickled. I've seen this one pluggin' along with everythin' on her in a winter's blow an' devil a man able to stand on his feet. Let me give you a mug of coffee. 'Twill brace you up." He handed a steaming mug over to the nervous Anderson.

"Ain't the wind awful, Mister Jennings? Look how the vessel's tumbling about."

"Nawthin' at all," replied the other. "Wait 'til ye're lyin'-to in a winter's breeze on some shoal water and ye'll know what tumblin' about is. I've seen 'em spill the coals out the stove sometimes. Aye, I've bin able to walk along the sides of the bunks—she was over so far—Crawlin' Christopher! What's happened?"

The scalding coffee shot up in his face; Tony was catapulted into his stomach, and both men were hove down to leeward as the vessel fetched up in her headlong storming with a series of violent shocks.

"She's struck!" roared Jennings, jumping to his feet and making for the ladder. A deluge of water poured down through the opening and he was hurled back, gasping and spluttering. The four or five men bunking in the forecastle tumbled out of their pews, and with the sleep still in their eyes they rushed for the companion while the vessel lifted and pounded in the sea-way.

" 'Tis Sable Island Nor'-west Bar!" shouted someone, and Tony was conscious of being hauled out on a sea-swept deck and dragged bodily aft. In the gloom, a cursing mob laboured getting the dories out, and above the thunderous flapping of the sails and the roaring of the white water which surrounded the schooner, came the skipper's voice, "Stand by the vessel, boys! Git th' sail off her—"

"Stand by and be damned!" shouted a man leaping over the rail into a dory. "Git out of this blazin' surf or we'll be swamped or washed away!" And the others followed him.

Clutching the coamings of the cabin slide, Tony stood almost petrified with terror, and he only came to his senses when a rough hand grabbed him by the shoulder and dragged him over to the lee quarter. "Jump naow!" rasped a voice in his ear. "There's yer dory. Wake up and crank yer engine while I fend her off! Hurry, naow, for th' love o' Mike!" It was Jennings, and like a man in a trance, the other turned on the switch and gave the fly-wheel a pull. Put! put! put! "Is she started?" roared the fisherman, fending off with an oar.

"Yes, she's started—"

"Then git out th' way an' gimme th' tiller!"

Built for sailing in a chop, the pedlar's gasolene dory drew out of the inferno of surf into the smoother sea in deep water. Tony, scarce knowing what had happened, sat on the floor boards clutching the risings with both hands until Jennings snarled him into action with a string of biting oaths.

"Bail her out, blast you! She's half full of water! Show some life, you runt!" And the pedlar bailed as he never bailed in his life before.

"How much gas have you got?" came the fisherman's snapping voice.

"Gas? Oh, enough for a day anyway. Filled the tank at Canso to carry the ice."

"Darn lucky for us. 'Vast bailin' and watch that engine."

"Are we safe, Mr. Jennings?" Anderson dared not look over the gunwale at the welter of sea in which they were tumbling.

"Safe enough ef you keep that engine a-goin'. Gone coons ef you don't!"

For over an hour, Jennings manœuvred the dory among the heaving combers, and when the dawn came, he could see five of the *Artimon's* dories far to leeward when they rose on the crest of a sea.

"They're a mile to loo'ard," he growled to Tony, who, with his head inside the little hatch, was jealously watching the chugging motor. "We'll run down to them."

Running before the sea and wind, they speedily came up to the first of the dories with the skipper and four others in it. Mitchell was standing in the bow waving his arms and shouting something.

"What's th' racket?" bawled Jennings as he rounded up by the skipper's dory.

"Th' vessel," shouted Mitchell. "Th' vessel! Look! She's come off th' Bar!"

Jennings glanced in the direction indicated by the skipper and was astonished to see the *Artimon* standing out to the northward again with her sails drawing, and to all appearance sailing as if she had a crew aboard.

"Git after her!" roared Mitchell. "We've only got

one oar in this dory and the others are lyin' to their buoy anchors."

For over an hour, the gasolene dory pursued the crewless schooner, and if the jib sheet had not carried away, it is doubtful if they ever would have caught her. When the sheet parted, the jib lighted up, and the mains'l jammed her up in the wind.

When they came alongside, Jennings leaped over the rail and hove the wheel down hard. Then he helped Tony aboard, and making the dory painter fast, swung off and picked up the others.

"Did you ever know the like?" ejaculated Mitchell when he got aboard again. "Came off Sable Island Bar herself. Shift o' wind and rise o' tide. Lord! but I'm th' lucky man. Thar's nawthin' can bust me. Is she makin' much water, boys?"

"Over the floors aft an' for'ad," answered a man.

"Aye, aye," said the skipper, "but she'll float to Canso, no doubt. Man th' pumps and git busy with th' draw-buckets in cabin an' fo'c'sle. We'll work her in and I'll give you fellers twenty-five dollars a man extry for salvagin' her—" He grinned and continued. "That is—all 'cept Tony here. He's a millionaire an' don't need th' money." Tony said nothing but picked up a bucket.

Of the passage to Canso a great deal might be written. Of the weary hours of bailing and pumping the schooner to keep her afloat, a chapter teeming with incidents of endurance and perseverance on the part of tired men could easily be penned. But suffice it to say, the *Artimon* was picked up off Cranberry Head and towed into harbour by the Fishery cruiser. Until a place could be got ready for her on the marine railway, a tug with

a powerful pump relieved the *Artimon's* crew, and the halibut and cod were transferred to another vessel.

Mitchell was busy, very busy—much too busy to bother about Tony Anderson. Tony and his motor-dory had vanished soon after the schooner towed in and the crowd calculated that the little pedlar had had enough of seafaring to last him the rest of his natural life. Denman had dismissed Tony as a mere incident and he was telling a couple of newspaper men about the miraculous happening on Sable Island Bar when a pompous-looking person swung a leg over the rail and proceeded to tack a paper upon the schooner's main-mast.

"Say, you!" boomed Mitchell anxiously. "What th' blazes are you up to?"

The pompous person stared coolly at the truculent skipper. "You are Captain Mitchell, I presume?" he said calmly.

"Aye, that's me. What's th' game?"

"Your vessel is libelled for salvage."

"But there ain't no salvage in this case, Mister," growled the other with a confident smile on his hard visage. "I'm too wise for that. I made a dicker with the boys to bring her in for twenty-five bucks a head and they did it. You ain't got nawthin' on me, Mister Sheriff, so haul yer darned paper off'n my main-mast!"

"Here's a letter for you which may put a different complexion on the matter," said the official, handing Mitchell a legal blue envelope.

"Read it out!" snapped the big skipper. "I ain't no scholard."

The other opened the missive and cleared his throat. "Ahem! This is from Skinnem and Taxem—a legal

firm ashore here. It reads as follows:—'Captain Denman Mitchell, schooner *Artimon*. Dear Sir: We are instructed by our client, Mr. Anthony Anderson, to attach your vessel for the sum of Four Thousand Dollars for services rendered to the fishing schooner *Artimon* by the said Anthony Anderson. We find the value of the vessel, gear, etc., to be in the neighbourhood of Nine Thousand Dollars and a rough estimate of her stock, which we have also attached, is approximately Three Thousand Dollars—making a total value of Twelve Thousand Dollars. As our client was not a member of your crew, nor upon Articles, and as you abandoned the vessel on Sable Island Bar, our client, using his own motor-boat, picked up the abandoned schooner. You also failed to include our client in the salvage agreement which you made with your own crew. In view of these facts, our client has a just and valid claim for the amount mentioned and suit is being entered against you for the amount aforestated. A statement attested to by Mr. William Jennings has been made before the authorized officials in this port. Awaiting your reply, we remain, yours truly, Skinnem and Taxem, per J. H. Skinnem.' That's the letter, sir."

For ten minutes, by any clock, Denman Mitchell gave vent to his feelings without repeating the same oath. Finally, he gazed sorrowfully at the letter and passed his hand over his head. "Oh, I'm a funny bird, I am! I'm the great lad for practical jokes! He's got me poke-hooked, by cripes! Yes, poke-hooked! And as I'm the owner of this onlucky, consarned hooker, I'll have to pay! In future, there's two things Denny Mitchell 'ull steer

clear of—and that's rum and shanghaied pedlars. Swamp me!"

Anderson runs a fisherman's outfitting store in East Harbour now, and the East Harbour *Echo* notes that "Mr. William Jennings has gone into the clam business with a new motor-boat which he recently purchased." Captain Denman Mitchell, of the fishing schooner *Artimon*, invariably loses his temper when the names of Anderson or Jennings are mentioned.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

LIST OF CANADIAN SHORT STORIES IN BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

NOTE.—This is not an attempt at a bibliography of Canadian stories, but a list of some of those I have encountered in my researches. An asterisk prefixed to a title indicates a story which for me had unusual interest or merit, in many cases a value comparable to that of the stories reprinted.

AITKEN, KENNETH L.
Height of Land. *Canadian Magazine*, 1904.
*From the Admiralty Files. *Century*, December, 1919.
*Woe Bit Ghost. *Metropolitan*, March, 1920.

ATLEE, BENGE
The Book. *MacLean's Magazine*, 1923.

BARNARD, LESLIE GORDON
House That Would Not Awake. *Munsey's*, June, 1924.
Lighted Windows. *MacLean's*, December 15, 1923.
*Marie Louise. *Century*, March, 1927.
*Traitor. *Century*, July, 1927.

BARR, ROBERT
*Fear of It. *The Face and the Mask.*
*Raid on McIlish. *The Face and the Mask.*
*"Where Ignorance is Bliss". *The Face and the Mask.*
*Bargain Counter Sale. *Tales of Two Continents.*

BAXTER, ARTHUR BEVERLEY
Airy Prince. *A Blower of Bubbles.*

BAXTER, HARRIET R.
*Secret of the Lord. *Canada Monthly*, November, 1916.

BIERWERT, JEAN
At Point Aux Pins. *Canadian Magazine*, June, 1895.
Bill Bradley, Harvester. *Canadian Home Journal*, August, 1917.

BURTON, JEAN
*Phyllus. *Canadian Forum*, October, 1927.

BYCHINSKY, ANNA KURYLA
*Dowry. *MacLean's*, February 1, 1926.

CALLAGHAN, MORLEY
*Amuck in the Bush. *American Caravan*, 1927.
*Girl of Ambition. *This Quarter*, Winter, 1926.
*Last Spring They Came Over. *Transition*, June, 1927.
*Wedding Dress. *This Quarter*, Spring, 1927.

CAMPBELL, K. L.
*Weighed in the Balance. *Canadian Magazine*, March, 1913.

CAMPBELL, W. W.
"General" Bain of Sandy Beach. *Canadian Magazine*, October, 1894.
*Love's Tragedy at Scratch Point. *Canadian Magazine*, August, 1894.
CHUTE, ARTHUR HUNT
Stranger. *MacLean's*, January 1, 1926.
CLARKE, G. FREDERICK
Spark. *MacLean's*, February, 1915.
COTES, MRS. EVERARD
*Mother in India. *The Pool in the Desert.*
*Pool in the Desert. *The Pool in the Desert.*
DAY, FRANK PARKER
*Epic of Marble Mountain. *Harper's*, September, 1923.
DE LA ROCHE (see Roche, de la)
DENISON, MERRILL
*Weather Breeder. *Harper's*, August, 1924.
DICKIE, FRANCIS
Irony. *MacLean's*, March 1, 1926.
DRUMMOND, W. H.
Montmorenci Election. *Everybody's*, Vol. 7: 97.
DUNCAN, NORMAN
*Art of Terry Lute. *Harbour Tales Down North.*
*Beat t' Harbour. *The Way of the Sea.*
*Chase of the Tide. *The Way of the Sea.*
*Fruits of Toil. *The Way of the Sea.*
*Healer From Far-Away Cove. *The Way of the Sea.*
*Hypothetical Case. *Harper's*, June, 1915.
*Little Nipper o' Hide-and-Seek Harbour. *Harbour Tales Down North.*
*Madman's Luck. *Harbour Tales Down North.*
*Rage of the Sea. *The Way of the Sea.*
*Small Sam Small. *Harbour Tales Down North.*
*Strength of Men. *The Way of the Sea.*
*Two Men of Linger Tickle. *Ladies' Home Journal*, July, 1916.
DUNCAN, SARAH JEANETTE (See Cotes, Mrs. Everard)
DURKIN, DOUGLAS
*White Streak. *Century*, July, 1926.
FORSYTH, R. B.
*Yellow Clay. *MacLean's*, March 15, 1927.
FRASER, W. A.
Ride of Chester Cavendish. *Canadian Magazine*, October, 1905
Lost Stirrup. *MacLean's*, May, 1922.
Joke Horse. *Saturday Evening Post*, February 13, 1926.
*Smoothers. *MacLean's*, January 1, 1926.
FRECHETTE, LOUIS
*Weep Poor Will. *Canadian Magazine*, October, 1905.
GERY, R. V.
*Alouette. *MacLean's*, October 1, 1927.

GIDLOW, ELSA
*Reality. *San Francisco Review*, May, 1926.
GRAHAM, JEAN
*Butterfly Etude. *Canadian Magazine*, September, 1911.
GREEN, J. H.
Flagellant of Farthing Rock. *MacLean's*, January 15, 1925.
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Silver Fox. *Down North on the Labrador.*
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There's Trouble on the Sea. *Labrador Days.*
Leading Light. *Labrador Days.*
HALE, KATHERINE
*Friday's Child. *Canadian Magazine*, December, 1910.
HALIBURTON, T. C. (Sam Slick)
Letter From John Skinner, Butcher, to Mary Hyde. *The Letter Bag of the Great Western.*
Letter From a Servant in Search of a Place. *The Letter Bag of the Great Western.*
*Ball At Government House. *The Old Judge.*
*The Cushion Dance. *The Old Judge.*
Witch of Inky Dell. *The Old Judge.*
HARDY, W. G.
*The Swamp Bridge. *MacLean's*, February 1, 1927.
HARRIS, FRANK MANN
Cryin' Willy Painter. *Saturday Evening Post*, November 5, 1927.
HICKMAN, ALBERT
*A-Flat Polonaise. *Canadian Nights.*
*Man with the Horse's Neck. *Canadian Nights.*
*Overproof. *Canadian Nights.*
*Unfinished Love Story. *Canadian Nights.*
HUMPHREY, GEORGE
*Father's Hand. *Bookman*, (N.Y.), June, 1918.
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IMRIE, WALTER MCLAREN
*Daybreak. *Legends.*
*Dead Men's Teeth. *Legends.*
*Remembrance. *Legends.*
*Storm. *Legends.*
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*Man Who Slept Till Noon. *Harper's*, June, 1918.
*Centenarian. *Harper's*, May, 1919, and O'Brien, *Best Short Stories of 1919.*
*Sunset Homesteader. *MacLean's*, June, 1920.
*Man Proposes. *Everybody's*, August, 1905.
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*The Quarrel. *Canadian Forum*, August, 1922.

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*Backsliding of Elder Pletus. *Canadian Magazine*, August, 1893.
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*On the Wire. *Boston Evening Transcript*, July 10, 1918.
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*Squamish Legend of Napoleon. *Legends of Vancouver.*
Delaware Idol. *The Shaganappi.*
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*Riders to the Moon. *Collier's*, February 3, 1927.
*Shark. *Collier's*, June 25, 1927.
KILMAN, JULIAN
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*Laugh. *Double Dealer*, October, 1921.
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*Going West. *Pictorial Review*, September, 1918. Also in book form.
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*Hanging of Mary Dyer. *McClure's*, November, 1906.
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Mist Green Oats. *Stories from the Midland.*
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*Texts. *Adventure*, November 23, 1926.
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*Municipal Pottery. *The Quill*, April, 1923.
People Must Eat. *MacLean's*, March 1, 1927.
LAUT, AGNES
*Neither Bond Nor Free. *The Quenchless Light.*
*There Shall Be No More Death. *The Quenchless Light.*
LEACOCK, STEPHEN
*John and I, or How I Nearly Lost My Husband. *Harper's*, September, 1920.
*The Ministrations of the Rev. Mr. Drone: The Whirlwind Campaign in Mariposa: The Beacon on the Hill. *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town.*
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*Larry of The Seminary. *Savour of Salt.*
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LUGRIN, N. DE BERTRAND
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MACBETH, MADGE
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MACKAY, ISABEL ECCLESTONE
*Mr. Penn Becomes Immortal. *MacLean's*, June 15, 1927.
MCARTHUR, PETER
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*Overlooking of Gideon. *Canadian Magazine*, December, 1910.
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*Lost—A Child's Laughter. *Delineator*, June, 1926.
*Akin to Love. *Canadian Magazine*, December, 1909.
MOORE, NAPIER
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MOORE, ST. CLAIRE
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*Susie and Perce. *The Midland*, August, 1926.
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*Trail Sign. *Short Stories*, February 10, 1927.
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*Sabbath. *McGill Fortnightly Review*, February 2, 1927.
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*District Attorney Wickson. *From the Life.*
*Dr. Adrian Hale Hellmuth. *Some Distinguished Americans.*
*Owen Carey. *From the Life.*
*Peter Quale. *Some Distinguished Americans.*
*Sir Watson Tyler. *From the Life.*
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*Derelict. *Cumner's Son.*
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*Lake of the Great Slave. *An Adventurer of the North.*
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*Parpon the Dwarf. *The Lane That Had No Turning.*
*Prairie Vagabond. *Pierre and His People.*
*Stone. *Pierre and His People.*
*Story of the Limeburner. *The Lane That Had No Turning.*
*Three Commandments in the Vulgar Tongue. *An Adventurer of the North.*
*Uncle Jim. *The Lane That Had No Turning.*
*Upset Price. *The Lane That Had No Turning.*
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*Angels' Shoes. *Angels' Shoes.*
*Basswood Bough. *Collier's*, September 29, 1923.
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*Desert Road. *Angels' Shoes.*
*He That Cometh After. *Angels' Shoes.*
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*Man They Pitied. *Century*, November, 1921.
*Men Who Climbed. *Angels' Shoes.*
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*Trimmer of the Ispahan. *MacLean's*, July 15, 1927.

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*Handcuffed! *MacLean's*, June 15, 1927.
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*Do Seek Their Meat From God. *Earth's Enigmas.*
*Gentleman in Feathers. *They Who Walk in The Wild.*
*Kill. *Watchers of the Trail.*
*Last Bull. *Kings in Exile.*
*Laugh in the Dark. *Watchers of the Trail.*
*Nest of the Mallard. *The Backwoodsman.*
*Perdu. *Earth's Enigmas.*
*Strayed. *Earth's Enigmas.*
*Treason of Nature. *Haunters of the Silences.*
*Vagrants of the Barren. *The Backwoodsman.*
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*Cure.
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